



Today's discussion is from the
Fireline Safety Category.

UNINFORMED ON STRATEGY, TACTICS OR HAZARDS

Firefighters who are uninformed on strategy, tactics or hazards are in conflict with Watchout Situation #5. Before going to the fireline, it is imperative that firefighters obtain information about strategies, tactics or hazards by asking themselves the following questions:

- Can communications be established to find out strategy, tactics or hazards? Discuss ways you might establish communications; for example, contacting someone who is already on the fire and asking them what tactics and strategies are working or not working, what hazards they have witnessed, etc.
- Can scouting safely identify potential hazards? Talk about different methods of scouting a fire (e.g., using a lookout from your crew or sending a line scout ahead, utilizing air attack or the spotter on a smokejumper airplane). Discuss what types of hazards you might come across and ways you would mitigate them. For example, arriving at a fire after dark and a being instructed to dig line downhill with the fire below. How could you make this a safe situation?
- Have strategies, tactics or hazards changed since last informed? Discuss situations that might alter the way you are fighting a fire (e.g., wind shifts, resources you expected don't arrive, etc.). Also, think about what new hazards can develop while you are on the fireline (e.g., roots burning out and trees coming down, winds shifting direction and speed, etc.)
- Can you get a briefing from your supervisor? Talk about the importance of constant communications and ensuring firefighters are on the same page with strategies and tactics. For example, if one crew decides to do a burnout, but doesn't let the crew at the other end of the line know what they are doing, then what can happen?
- To reduce the risks:
 - Post lookouts.
 - Determine escape routes and establish safety zones.
 - Consider retreating until you are informed.
 - Don't leave a staging area or operational briefing until you have all the pertinent information. Emphasize ways to inform firefighters about strategies, tactics and hazards. Tell a story about when you were uninformed and what you did to correct the situation so that you were safe.
 - Get the national standard Incident Response Pocket Guide standard briefing

References:

[Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations](#)
[Incident Response Pocket Guide](#)

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

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