

Regional Fire Operations Group

To: Fire Defense Board Chiefs

From: The Regional Fire Operations Group (RFOG)

Subject: Letter of proposal: Rope Search Line System

Date: November 18, 2007

Absent a national Rope Search standard the Regional Fire Operations Group (RFOG) is forwarding the following recommendation to our area Fire Defense Board representatives.

It is not the position of RFOG to dictate individual department rope search techniques and/or procedures; however, in an effort, to meet our goal of seamless interoperability and to stay consistent with other regional emergency service providers, RFOG does recommend a standardized approach for the physical design of a rope search system.

This standard, adopted by RFOG, CCFD#1, LOFD, PFB and TVF&R, consists of a system of attachment rings and measurement knots at 20 foot intervals indicating the user's distance into the structure and direction of travel.

The rope search line consists of 200 feet of lightweight Kevlar 3/8 inch rope in a Cordura bag (the rope type, size, length and means of deployment may vary from department to department). Every 20 feet, a series of overhand knots are tied to represent distance. One knot represents 20 feet and each additional knot represents an additional 20 feet (e.g., 1 knot = 20', 2 knots = 40', 3 knots = 60').

A metal ring (2 inches in diameter) is tied into the rope immediately following the series of knots. This ring is intended as an attachment point for a personal search line (PSL).

In emergency situations, firefighters can follow the knots to the exit point similar to the couplings on a hose line. The pneumonic "Bumps to the Pump" is an easy way to remember the direction of egress.

There are search lines manufactured and available for retail; *however*, they may be designed using the exact opposite pattern (ring first, followed by overhand knots). If this opposite pattern

is used in conjunction with our recommended system, it could result in disorientation and injury of firefighters.

Design and manufacturer information is available upon request from your RFOG representative.

Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the recommended system.



Figure 1 (Indicating 20 feet)