

Miller, Diane M. (CDC/NIOSH/EID)

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Comments

I am a retired Career Battalion Chief from Baltimore County Fire Department with over 30 years experience. I am currently a Safety Specialist with the VA and work closely with the Fire Chief at this location.

The subject I wish to comment on is the fact that Fire Departments also need to address a Personnel Accountability Report or (PAR). When operations have begun on a vacant building by first arriving engine companies many, many times they begin an interior attack. They seem oblivious to the fact that they are risking a lot for no gain.

Fire Departments also need to provide a quick easy accountability system besides evacuation orders. This way when the Incident Commander orders them to evacuate we have a way for him/her to quickly obtain the information that everyone is out of the structure. They can also communicate that we are in a defensive mode of operation. Regular training with a PAR system will ensure that all personnel are accounted for and especially in the volunteer system enforce a accountability check-in system. Many times I would arrive on the scene of an incident to be wondering what are they doing inside of this building ? Many engine officers consider it their duty to attack all fires by interior attack. It became my duty to protect them by ordering an evacuation and PAR and clear communication of this is an Defensive Operation.

Usually the result was everyone went home and they could blame the Chief for pulling them out. As I got off duty though I could only remember that my job many times was protecting our firefighters from themselves.