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## Snapshot Size-Up #102



### Church Fire Considerations

Church Fires pose various unique challenges for firefighters. Below is a list of 10 occupancy specific considerations that pertain to operations at these types of structures.

1. For Gothic Style, Class 4 construction (heavy timber), use 2-1/2" hose lines.
2. Slate tile roofs will be difficult (maybe impossible) to access and ventilate.
3. Attached schools, residences, and rectories will need to be searched and evacuated.
4. Often times, these fires come in as delayed alarms which result in advanced conditions. Big Fire means big water and more resources.
5. Thermal Imaging Cameras should be utilized early to determine the fires location and extent.
6. Search ropes should also be utilized to help overcome large areas and maze like floor configuration.
7. There will be numerous priceless contents within the Church. Special emphasis should be placed on efficient salvage and overhaul operations.
8. Assign two members to control and shut the utilities.
9. Firefighters may find it challenging to access the lofts, ceiling spaces, and basement areas.
10. Prepare for Defensive Operations (See Snapshot Size-Up #111 for tips on switching from Offensive to Defensive Operations)



Deputy Chief Frank Viscuso is a twenty-year veteran of the fire service. He is a regular contributor to Fire Engineering Magazine & FireOpsOnline.com. He is also co-author of the book Fireground Operational Guides (PennWell 2011). The book features universal tactical worksheets and operational guides for more than 70 incidents that range from water, gas and electrical emergencies to multiple-alarm structure fires.