

Firefighter Drags and Lifts for Removal

Flat Surface Drag

ONE RESCUER

1. Place downed firefighter flat on back
2. If possible loosen waist straps and disconnect and reconnect the waist straps in-between the downed Firefighter's legs. (this is to prevent the SCBA harness from ridding to far up on the downed firefighter possibly restricting breathing of the downed firefighter)
3. Loosen the SCBA shoulder straps of the downed firefighter to use as handles to pull and extricate the downed firefighter.
4. A 20 foot piece of webbing can and really should be used to assist in removal of the downed firefighter. The webbing should be fed through the loosened shoulder straps and formed into a girth hitch. The shoulder straps of the downed firefighters SCBA should be re-tightened and the rescuer should use the webbing as a mechanical advantage to help pull the downed firefighter to safety. (The 20 foot length is determined because you can use this webbing in many applications and more particularly in removal of a downed firefighter two rescuers can pull on the same webbing and extricate / remove the victim. If all of the RIT members have a piece of webbing such as this they can use these sections of webbing to work together to removal downed firefighters from below grade, etc. the applications are endless.)

TWO RESCUERS

1. Position downed firefighter flat on back
2. Loosen waist strap if possible re-connect waist straps between downed firefighter's legs. (this is to prevent the SCBA harness from riding to far up on the downed firefighter possibly restricting breathing of the downed firefighter)
3. Loosen the SCBA shoulder straps of the downed firefighter to use as handles to pull and extricate the downed firefighter.
4. 1st rescuer at head of downed firefighter
5. 2nd rescuer at feet of downed firefighter
6. 1st rescuer grab under the shoulder straps or the armpits
7. 2nd rescuer raises one leg of the downed firefighter and push against the downed firefighter's thigh.
8. Moved downed firefighter in a systematic method out of the building.

UPSTAIRS DRAG

1. Position downed firefighter with head first to the stairs.
2. If possible disconnect the waist straps on the downed firefighters SCBA and re-connect the between the downed firefighters legs.
3. Loosen shoulder straps
4. 1st rescuer straddles head with back towards stairs
5. 1st rescuer then grabs shoulder straps
6. 2nd rescuer gets between the legs of the downed firefighter with knees lifted
7. 1st rescuer lifts the downed firefighter so that the SCBA of the downed firefighter is resting on the 2nd or 3rd step.
8. 2nd rescuer places the downed firefighter's legs over his / her shoulders with thighs resting on shoulders.
9. Both rescuers lift / push the downed firefighter one step at a time out of the building.

Downstairs Drag

1. Position downed firefighter with back and head towards stairs
2. If possible disconnect waist strap and reconnect between downed firefighter's legs.
3. Loosen downed firefighter's SCBA shoulder straps.
4. Position 1st rescuer at head of the downed firefighter using shoulder straps as handles.
5. 2nd rescuer should use webbing and wrap around the lower portion of the downed firefighter.
6. 1st rescuer drags the downed firefighter down the stairs.
7. 2nd rescuer slows the decent of the downed firefighter by pulling back on the webbing and controlling the removal of the downed firefighter.

Lifts

There are hundreds of ways to lift a downed firefighter and the task of doing it is a specialty on its own. The fact of the matter is we can not rely on specialty equipment and specialty training to lift a downed firefighter out of a hole or out and down from an upper level. We must rely on our (20 foot webbing, and even using more than one together) brut force and manhandling talents in order to lift and or lower a downed firefighter to safety. An important note to think about it is that removing the downed firefighter to a safe area is good until a more advanced removal can be constructed. The entire concept of the RIT is to save our own and sometimes removing the downed firefighter to another area of the structure is enough to save his / her life.

Examples of lifting are in picture form and I have no way of placing them in this paper at this time.

Breaching Walls Interior / Exterior

Breaching through the interior or exterior walls is done to both gain access to a downed firefighter and / or to or to move the downed firefighter from room to room or to remove them completely from the structure.

After closing fire spread openings such as doors leading to the immediate area or door to the room;

Remember when breaching any wall: Size up area that you will be breaching for,

Outlets

Appliances (propane, natural gas etc.)

Windows

Doors

Sinks

Bath tubs

Shower stalls

Sinks

Piping (Water / Sewer, Gas etc.)

Toilets / sinks

Any unmovable objects

Interior Wall Breaching

Drywall

*In order to get yourself through a breach in drywall you will most likely not need to remove any studs from the wall. **BUT** to remove / drag a downed firefighter through a breached wall you will most definitely need to remove at least one stud to have enough room for escape.*

Tools will you need: any hand tool that you bring with you will be affective in breaching an interior drywall wall. The “Halligan Bar” is a great choice for two reasons. First is that you should have brought it with you and secondly it will do the job.

To breach the drywall wall.

1. You must first size up the wall. (See size up above)
2. You then use the “adz” end of the Halligan to cut the drywall as close to the stud as possible.

You can find the studs quickly by finding an electrical outlet or switch and understanding that these outlets are attached to the stud. Making locating the stud easy

3. Cut the drywall from about head level (kneeling height) to the floor.
4. Cut the drywall from head level to floor at the next stud.
5. Pull the cut drywall from the studs using Halligan bar (or hook / pole)
6. Clear opening as needed

Important: *check the room, before you open too much and or try to enter the next room. Checking for fire, high heat floor integrity etc.*

7. Remove inside layer (the other room’s wall) by striking the drywall with the tool standing flat parallel with the floor (using the Halligan Bar point and adz end as a battering ram).

8. Repeat steps 2 through 7 between the next studs.

9. Remove wall stud by using the Halligan Bar as an axe or battering ram.

Remember: *Clearing the opening of all debris is crucial. All debris must be removed in order not to become entangled.*

10. Once studs have been removed, crawl through opening and pull downed firefighter through as well.

Plaster Walls

All the steps are the same, but a few important issues occur when working with plaster walls.

Plaster is harder to breach than drywall simply because of the construction of the plaster and lathe.

The point end of the Halligan Bar works well in breaking through the Plaster and Lathe.

More force will be needed to breach through a Plaster and Lathe wall but the same principle is used to make an opening in such a wall.

Even though Plaster and Lathe walls are harder to breach than drywall. They can still be breached with minimal personnel and minimal equipment.

Exterior Walls

Exterior walls are typically constructed out of three types of materials. Sometimes, a combination of the materials makes up the exterior walls.

The three types of exterior wall construction are:

Wood Frame

Masonry

Metal

The common combination of materials:

Wood Frame with Brick / Masonry Façade

Wood Frame with Metal Siding

Masonry walls with Wood siding

The point is there are many combination exterior walls.

Breaching Exterior Walls

Breaching exterior walls is normally used to enlarge openings or to create an opening to enter and remove the downed firefighter from the outside.

Because most of the exterior wall breaching is for extrication of the downed firefighter information will be found in both breaching and enlarging openings sections of this program. From this point breaching and enlarging the opening will intertwine.

With all types of wall construction the easiest / more efficient way to breach a wall is to use existing openings. Windows doors, etc. This type of breaching is known as enlarging openings.

To breach a wood wall the best way to breach is to enlarge the opening at a window by using a power saw to enlarge the window openings. This process is simply extending the window down if a high sill window and or bringing the window opening up if it is a high sill window. Regardless of the terminology enlarging an opening is to make removal of the downed fire possible by making the opening large enough to slide the downed firefighter out at a floor level. Whether it is ground floor level or not the removal of the downed firefighter out of an enlarged opening will make the removal easier, simply because lifting of the downed firefighter up and through the window is eliminated.

An example of window (exterior) enlargement is:

1. Identify the window or opening to be enlarged.
2. Size-up the window / opening to be enlarged (the same way you size-up a wall. Gas, Sinks, Tubs, etc.)
3. Using a saw (only one person runs the saw)
4. Cut down on the left or right side of the window from sill to floor level
5. Cut along the floor where your first cut finished. Stop about 3 feet or so beyond the window edge (side of window)
6. cut from the opposite side of the window from step 4
7. Make a parallel cut to the floor from the bottom of the window.
8. Cut from #7 cut down to the floor
9. The second firefighter on this operation acts as a safety and watches for obstructions and obstacles or other hazards.
10. Remove the enlarged piece from the opening.

Tools and cuts may vary depending on the situation but this basic principle will get you through to the advanced situations. (Adapt, improvise, overcome, etc.)

The above example is with a wood wall.

The operation is changed slightly when masonry or masonry façade is involved. The change that needs to be made is either using a masonry blade power saw to get through the masonry or using the same saw to remove the façade then use all the steps above to accomplish you task. Another consideration is to use a sledge hammer or Halligan Bar or any striking tool to break away the masonry façade. Then return to the above steps to finish the task.

The operation is changed slightly when the walls are made of metal as well. A power saw with a metal cutting blade is the tool of choice in this operation and then all of the steps are outlined above to complete the task.

LADDERS

Ladder placement is a crucial part of RIT as well as one of the most important tasks on the fireground.

Ladders are placed by the RIT team for escape routes for interior crews as well as entrance and egress routes of the RIT team itself to search, locate and remove downed firefighters.

Ladder placement on a RIT deployment can and will be multi faceted. These ladders may be thrown in places not normally thought of on the fireground or to places that seem unnatural to the untrained eye. For example a ladder thrown to the floor level of a third story floor is not a natural place for a ladder to be placed. But with an enlargement of the third floor window opening operation a ladder thrown to the floor level of the third floor may just be the ticket.

Ladder placement climbing angles are not exactly going to be the same for RIT as they are for normal fireground operations as well. Ladders for RIT operations should most likely be at a lower angle than those normally used on the fireground. 70 degrees is too steep for most RIT applications and lower angles will help in many ways to the RIT effort. The work to be done off of the RIT ladders is unique to RIT functions in many ways.

Removal of the downed firefighter may be done using ladders. The rescuer may have to bring an unconscious fully geared firefighter down a ladder. There are several ways to do this task. For simplicity sake the face forward method works well in most RIT ladder removal scenarios. The rescuer faces the ladder and the downed firefighter is placed face down on the ladder with the rescuer directly behind him / her. The rescuer places his/ her knee in the groin area of the downed firefighter and keeps them from sliding down the ladder. The rescuer puts their arms underneath the downed firefighters armpits to help secure the downed firefighter to the ladder. One rung at a time the rescuer brings the downed firefighter to the ground / save area.

