

Search Begins With Sizeup

The first step in a search is to conduct a sizeup of the exterior of the building to determine if the building has light, moderate, or heavy damage. During this sizeup process, you:

- Gather more information about occupancy and danger (hazardous materials, etc.).
 - Correct outside problems (turn off gas if there is a leak, etc.).
 - Determine if you will enter the building.
 - Determine a plan of action for the search.
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Talking to Bystanders

As part of the sizeup, you may need to talk to bystanders or people who are familiar with the structure to obtain information that will assist in planning.

Remember, though, that bystanders may be confused by the event. They may exaggerate numbers or may have inaccurate memories of what has transpired.

Search Methodology

Search operations involve using an effective search methodology, based on the sizeup, to locate potential victims.

An effective search methodology:

- Is systematic and thorough.
 - Avoids unnecessary duplication of effort.
 - Documents search results.
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Search Methods

Search and rescue personnel use the following methods in locating victims and documenting results:

- Call out to victims.
 - Use a systematic search pattern.
 - Stop frequently to listen for noise, such as tapping.
 - Triangulate.
 - Mark entrances to searched areas to provide records of the search results.
 - Report results.
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Search Methods (Continued)

Call Out to Victims

Begin the search by calling out to victims:

- Shout something like, "If anyone can hear me, come to the sound of my voice." Repeat the call a number of times to allow survivors to locate you and respond.
- If any victims respond, give them further directions, such as "Stay here" or "Wait outside," depending on the condition of the building.

You should also ask the responding victims for any information that they may have about the building or other victims who may be trapped.

When Talking to Victims

Victims who respond to your voice may be in shock and confused. When giving them directions:

- Look directly at the victim.
 - Speak in short sentences.
 - Keep directions and questions simple like "Go outside by the large tree." "Stay here." "I may need your help." "How many others are in the building?" "Where are they?"
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Use a Systematic Search Pattern

To ensure that all areas of the building are covered, it is important to search the area systematically, using a consistent search pattern.

Examples of systematic search patterns include:

- Bottom-up/top-down.
- Right wall/left wall.

Following a pattern is very important in poorly lit areas. If you must leave the building, turn around and reverse your search to get to your starting point.

Stop Frequently To Listen

Periodically stop all movement and listen for sounds that could lead you to trapped victims, such as:

- Tapping.
 - Movement.
 - Voices.
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Search Methods (Continued)

Triangulate

Triangulation is an approach that enables rescuers to view a single location from several perspectives. To triangulate:

- Three rescuers form a triangle around an area where noise is heard or victims may be located.
 - Each rescuer directs a flashlight toward the area.
 - The lighting from different directions will eliminate shadows that could otherwise hide victims.
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Mark Searched Areas

Search and rescue teams should use a marking system to indicate that a team has entered a building and to document the results of their search when they leave that building.

Marking systems are used to:

- Indicate rescuer location.
 - Prevent duplication of search efforts.
 - Document search results.
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Report Results

CERT search and rescue teams should keep complete records, including:

- Removed victims.
- Victims who remain trapped or are dead.

All information should be reported to emergency services personnel when they reach the scene.

Lesson Summary

- Search should begin with a sizeup of the building interior.
 - Effective search methods include calling out, using a systematic pattern, listening for victim sounds, triangulation, marking searched areas, and reporting results.
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