

# The IDEAL Size-Up / First-in Report

By

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The fire service is deeply steeped in tradition. One area of traditional behavior is our love for acronyms. We have SCBA's, TIC's, ICS, NIMS, WMD, CBRN and on and on and on . . . . .

One of the most important tasks performed by the person sitting in the front passenger seat of fire apparatus ("The Chosen Few") is giving a first-in incident size-up report. What's often times frustrating for these "chosen few" is that the fire scene size-up acronyms we are taught get quite lengthy and confusing. We first learned REVES and RECEO and thought life was good. Then, someone threw WALLACE WAS HOT and COAL WAS WEALTH at us. Now what do we do. These acronyms are nice when you have the time, but if you're arriving on the scene and, as usual, have many tasks to accomplish in a short period of time, you really want a "mind-jogger" that is going to give you the opportunity to both size-up the incident and provide a timely, comprehensive first-in report. This is where the IDEAL acronym comes in.

When used upon arrival, the IDEAL size up acronym provides a description of the situation that includes the following:

- Arriving Units
- Building size
  - (small, medium, large)
- Building height
  - (# of floors)
- Type of construction
  - (wood-frame, masonry, steel, etc.)
- Type of occupancy
  - (nursing home, garage, house, etc.)
- Smoke / fire conditions present
  - (Nothing showing, light – moderate – heavy, *Working Fire* !)
- Assumption of Command
- Actions being taken
- Instructions to incoming units

We do this by transmitting the components of the acronym as follows:

- I** - Identify arriving unit (s)
- D** - Describe what you see
- E** - Explain what you intend to do
- A** - Assume Command
- L** - Let incoming units know what you want them to do or where you want them to go (Staging, etc.)

### IDEAL Size Up / First-in Report Tips & Tricks

- Adhere to the KISS method . . . call it like you see it. Isn't an educational institution really a school ???
- Educate yourself as to what light smoke, moderate smoke and heavy smoke really are and practice these skills with the "chosen few". Study pictures in fire service publications and videos and make your judgment call accordingly.
- Try to use it for fire incidents, as well as EMS calls such as MVC's, etc.
- Stress to your Dispatchers the importance of relaying to you what callers are reporting to them. Phoenix's proverbial Mrs. Smith usually doesn't call in and report that the "structure across from her structure is rapidly combusting and evolving heat, light, smoke and gases". She usually calls and says . . . "I need help, the garage across from my house is on fire". That's what should be reported to us !!

### Sample IDEAL Size-up / First-in Report

- Engine 3 to fire department dispatch – (I)
- we are on the scene of a multi-story school with nothing showing (D)
    - we'll be investigating (E)
      - Captain Morgan will be Command (A)
        - Ladder 7 & Rescue10 can stage out on Badger Avenue (L)  
*(we'll be switching to Fireground Frequency)*