

**NOTES FROM THE FIRE BARN**  
***Fire Service Expectations (part 2)***  
***Lt Rob Dixon***

Before continuing with examples of the four remaining levels of service, I need to emphasize that these definitions are intended to form a base of understanding for the reader. I am posting an email address for feedback on this column.

- II. ***Maximum Exposure Protection*** accepts that lives and property of the fire building may be lost, with a low probability of damage to exposures. The expected level of service is to prevent a fire from damaging structures not already involved in fire. Numerous examples exist for this service level. In general let's make the following statement: It is reasonable to expect any fire department arriving on scene in a hydrant area in less than six minutes of the call (four minute drive and setup) to be able to prevent substantial damage to an exposure.
- III. ***Industrial Protection*** strives to minimize the loss of life, property, and production. The expected level of service is quick detection and suppression of fire without interrupting production. Industrial protection is achieved by using sprinklers and fire alarm systems, with a timely fire department response. Newpage with its security, fire brigade, sprinklers, and fire alarm system is capable of extinguishing the majority of fires as soon as they are detected. The fire departments role is to ensure the fire has been extinguished, and minimize water and smoke damage. Schools and hospitals having sprinkler and fire alarm systems are also examples of buildings that should expect an industrial protection level of service.
- IV. ***Residential / Life Safety Protection*** strives to minimize the loss of life, and property. The expected level of service is timely rescue of victims and minimizing damage to property not already lost. Data on residential structure fire losses and fire propagation (fire growth) in un-sprinkled rooms clearly supports that an early (**less than ten minutes from ignition**) aggressive interior attack on a fire is usually the most effective strategy to reduce loss of lives and property. No one in the river valley should expect this level of service. We may all want it, but the fact is most fires burn undetected for a period of time, and resources required to provide this level of service are not dependably available to warrant a public expectation.
- V. ***Progressive & Proactive*** strives to prevent loss of life and property. The expected level of service is strategic and involves intervention, education, and code enforcement. In many European countries emphasis is placed on preventing fires from ever starting. The United States is beginning to catch on. Public education on the importance of smoke detectors, residential sprinklers, burning candles and getting in to the elementary schools to teach fire safety are a few examples of being proactive. We are doing a poor job of code enforcement; unfortunately this aspect of preventing loss of life and property is unpopular with entities trying to make money (have we already forgotten the 98 people that died at the Station Nightclub fire in Rhode Island)? The junior fire starter program is an excellent example of intervention. Exploring new technology and constantly evaluating a department's policies and procedures to ensure they are current and effective is progressive. The long term advantage to progressiveness is safer more efficient operations.

I hope there are at least a few questions. Again, this column is intended to be an interface between the public and the fire service. If you question why a fire department needs a 100 ft. aerial ladder when the tallest building in town is 60 ft; let's talk about it. I do not make policies, but I can give you a fire service perspective on a subject, and whether you agree or disagree, my desire is for you to at least have a better understanding.

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