

GUIDELINES FOR STORES AND STRIP SHOPPING CENTERS

By: Bill Gustin, Captain, Miami-Dade Fire Department

1. At night, locate store on fire by feeling for hot glass show-windows, look for soot-stained glass and scan front and rear of store with T.I.C.
2. Beware of hot, sooty show windows. Position personnel and master streams at side, flanking positions. Do not force entry until heavy stream devices and 2 ½ inch hose lines are ready.
3. Get a report from rear ASAP; chances are good that fire is closer to a rear door than front. Consider attacking fire from rear.
4. Pull ceiling immediately upon entering to check for fire in cockloft.
5. Beware of collapse potential of front façade and/or parapet wall.
6. Expect difficult forcible entry at rear doors. You will definitely need a saw and extra metal cutting blades.
7. Pull ceilings to check for extension to stores adjacent to fire.
8. Remember commercial occupancies tend to have high, multiple ceilings: use 8, 10 foot pike poles. If you encounter a new suspended ceiling in an old building, expect at least one more ceiling above it.
9. A T.I.C. is no substitute for pulling ceilings, it can't see through ceilings and insulation.
10. Get a view/report of the roof. You may identify:
 - A) sag
 - B) holes/burn through
 - C) heavy a/c units
 - D) parapets/fire walls
11. A ventilation hole cut over the seat of the fire will tend to limit horizontal spread of fire in cockloft.
12. Consider initial attack with 2 ½ inch hose for greater gpm, reach and penetration.
13. Remember in large commercial buildings the shortest, most direct path to the fire is usually the safest.
14. Intense, uncontrolled fire > 20 min expect roof collapse.
15. Forcible entry demands forcible exit: If entering the front, force rear doors for an alternate emergency exit.