



# Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology

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## TEFF: THE TEN ESSENTIAL FACTORS IN FIREFIGHTING

by

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**TEFF #1: LOOKOUTS:** Sufficient Lookouts are in place given the Hazard Assessment.

**TEFF #2: COMMUNICATIONS:** Sufficient Communications are in place: generally communications are needed w/ lookout(s), crews, supervisors, & adjoining forces, but there may be other critical links.

**TEFF #3: ESCAPE ROUTES:** A suitable Escape Route is known to all.

**TEFF #4: SAFETY ZONES:** A suitable Safety Zone is known to all. The Safety Zone may be to exit the fire area.

**TEFF #5: WEATHER:** The Weather is doing what is expected; no RH or wind trigger points have been crossed.

**TEFF #6: TERRAIN:** The Terrain is not causing unexpected fire behavior, creating a hazard for Firefighting Resources, or compromising the Escape Route.

**TEFF #7: FIRE BEHAVIOR** is understood in light of Weather, Terrain, & Fuel Type. Fire behavior is not doing anything unexpected, thus Firefighting Resources' tactics are succeeding as expected.

**TEFF #8: FIRE RESOURCES:** While more Resources may be on order, Firefighting Resources are sufficient for Firefighters to remain safe and to successfully implement current tactics.

**TEFF #9: FIRE STATUS:** Firefighters are aware of the scope of the fire, & current tactics are successful in light of amount of Firefighting Resources, and to keep current Firefighters safe.

**TEFF #10: FUEL TYPE:** Fuel Type is understood, and is exhibiting expected Fire Behavior.

## TEFF and Fire Suppression Tactics:

TEFF assessments are used in setting trigger points for appropriate firefighting tactics:

### Engage

- Anchor & Flank
- Direct attack
- Frontal assault on head
- Indirect attack
- Backfire/Burnout

### Modify

- Change engagement tactics
- Consolidate forces
- Hold, Improve, Reinforce
- Patrol, Hold what you have
- Pull back to better line location (indirect)

## Disengage

- Pull back closer to safety zone, take a break, rethink strategy
- Retreat
- Evacuate

## The Safety Need to Consolidate Firefighting Guidelines

TEFF provides a practical, easy-to-remember list of guidelines that consolidates over 133 existing firefighting guidelines, including the:

- 10 Standard Firefighting Orders
- 18 Watch Out Situations
- 7 Downhill Line Construction Checklist
- 4 Common Denominators of Fire Behavior on Tragedy Fires
- 7 Look Up, Down & Around Factors
- 4 LCES Components
- 9 Wildland Urban Watch Outs
- 10 Tactical Watch Outs
- 5 steps of the Risk Management Process
- 9 guidelines for Powerline Safety
- 6 Safety Zone Guidelines
- 16 items on the Structure Protection Checklist
- 7 items on the Structure Assessment Checklist
- 21 Advantages and Disadvantages of Direct and Indirect Attack

## About the Author

Patrick Withen, Ph.D. is a member of the Advisory Council for Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology (FUSEE). During winters he works as an Associate Professor of Sociology and Organizational Studies, and is Chair of the Dept. of Social Sciences at the University of Virginia at Wise. During summers he is a Smokejumper for the U.S. Forest Service, based out of McCall, ID. Contact Patrick at: [pwithen@virginia.edu](mailto:pwithen@virginia.edu)