



JUSTICE INSTITUTE
of BRITISH COLUMBIA
*Canada's leading public
safety educator*

The Effectiveness of Current Fire Fighter Rapid Intervention Teams

Investigators:

Jim Carter, Research Associate, Fire & Safety Division, JIBC (Principal) and Steve Wright, Port Coquitlam Fire and Emergency Services (Partner)

With Funding from:

WorkSafe BC

Project Description

The purpose of a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) is to locate and rescue lost, trapped, and injured firefighters at an emergency scene. The rationale for the proposed study is to evaluate the effectiveness of current Rapid Intervention Team protocols and provide any recommendations that could improve current RIT practices. This research will provide detailed information on the effectiveness of current RIT protocols and provide valuable information for policymakers who must decide on the appropriate allocation of resources at emergency scenes. Current RIT teams staffed with only two firefighters may be dangerously inadequate. The physical, mental, and psychological stresses associated with a fire fighter rescue are immense. Recent research has suggested that four fire fighters should be the minimum considered for fire fighter rescue, even though OSHA, NFPA and WorkSafe guidelines currently require two fire fighters.

The proposed research will determine the challenges associated with performing a fire fighter rescue and provide recommendations to improve RIT protocols and practices. This research is significant since there is very limited data available on the effectiveness of current RIT protocols, including supplied air systems and rescue tools. The main objective of the proposed research is to provide recommendations for developing more effective and efficient RIT protocols. This research is significant in that it will increase the overall level of safety for all fire fighters who may be exposed to an environment that poses an immediate threat to life and health.

July 2008