

	TRAVIS COUNTY ESD #5 MANCHACA FIRE RESCUE Department Best Practices	A405
	Authorized by:  Fire Chief Chris Barron	Effective: 12-27-2018 Rescinds: Reference: Application: Shift Personnel
Trash, Dumpster, and Chute Fires		

I. Purpose

To provide guidelines for trash, dumpster and trash chute fires.

II. Background

Fires involving trash and debris can be hazardous to firefighters because of the variety of unknown factors. These fires can contain hazardous materials, pressurized containers, poisons, and be used to destroy evidence of a crime. Additionally, fires in trash chutes of multi-story buildings can create a hazard to the structure as well.

III. Best Practices

The following best practices should be followed at all firefighting and emergency scene operations, except where deviation can be justified by Fire Officers. Any significant deviation should be communicated to responding/on-scene units as soon as possible.

- A. **Tactical considerations.** Trash fires by definition contain materials of no value to the owner. Responders should minimize personal risk in mitigating these incidents. Risk nothing to save nothing. Consider requesting an AFD rescue unit for assistance over any hazardous materials concerns.
- B. **PPE.** For trash in outdoor open spaces, firefighters should don wildland PPE with hand and eye protection as the minimum level of protection. If it is practical to remain upwind and out of the smoke and off-gassing materials from the fire, SCBA is not required. If conditions make access to a clean atmosphere questionable or the fire occurs in an enclosed space (including dumpsters) or structure, SCBA should be worn. Structural PPE should be considered for larger fires and for trash fires inside buildings or involving trash chutes.
- C. **Exposure protection.** The scene should be sized up on arrival and any exposures identified and protected before the trash fire is attacked.
- D. **Fire attack.** Depending on the size of the trash fire and the potential for extension, attack lines may range from booster lines to deck guns. Typically, fire attack will be from a defensive position. The use

of CAFS or class A nozzle aspirated foam is encouraged as it will allow the water to better penetrate the fuel and reduce overhaul problems.

- E. **Dumpsters.** Fires in dumpsters can be difficult to overhaul when filled with a large amount of material. It may be beneficial to plug the drain holes and fill the dumpster with water to both extinguish and overhaul the fire. Once extinguished, the drain holes should be unplugged to allow the dumpster to drain so it is not overweight for the trash removal service.

- F. **Roll-off dumpsters and trash trucks.** Fires may sometimes occur in trash trucks or roll-off dumpsters while in transit. There may be a desire to offload the trash to protect the vehicle and to facilitate extinguishment. If the load is dumped, it should be done in an area that will not present an exposure or traffic issue. The surface should be paved or capable of supporting equipment to remove the trash once extinguished with water. The potential and containment of water runoff should also be considered.
 - 1. **TDS trucks.** MFR may entertain escorting trucks destined for the TDS landfill in Creedmore if it is determined that the fire is controlled to a point where transport will not present a hazard to other traffic or properties. MFR should contact and coordinate the handling of the incident with ESD11.

- G. **Trash chutes.** Trash chutes are vertical shafts in multi-story residential buildings that allow residents to dispose of their trash conveniently to a dumpster located on the bottom floor at the base of the chute. The primary concern is when a fire occurs in the dumpster at the base of the chute, allowing smoke, heat, and fire to travel vertically in to the building.
 - 1. **Foam.** CAFS or class A foam should be used in the extinguishment of trash chute fires
 - 2. **Dumpster removal.** If possible, the trash container at the base of the chute should be removed from the building
 - 3. **Sprinklers.** Some trash chutes are sprinklered. Heads are typically located on every other floor. Firefighters should ensure that the control valves for the sprinklers are on.
 - 4. **TIC use.** Thermal cameras should be use but with the realization that they will be of limited use in trash chutes. Embers may be in spaces not visible to a TIC
 - 5. **Chute penetrations.** The entire chute should be inspected for any penetrations that could allow extension beyond the chute.
 - 6. **Chute inspection.** Every floor should be checked for extension and air quality. The roof should be checked for heat and smoke exiting from the chute vent.
 - 7. **Stand-by companies.** Even after a thorough overhaul, the need for a stand-by company to remain on scene should be considered.