

AST Aligns with Operational Doctrine Statement (ODS)

ODS sets the tone for operational behavior.

There will be times when the nature of an incident taxes the capacities of personnel and the organization. There will be times when the amount of uncertainty is difficult to overcome. But in all situations personnel have a duty to act when action is required and leaders have a duty to lead. The ODS is a framework for action and leadership.

Realistic training such as AST helps personnel to better prepare for such situations.

Demands of the Operational Environment

The operational environment places moral, mental, and physical demands on personnel.

AST assists with making correct actions second nature (system 1 thinking) by assisting with decision making through more realistic experiences in different environments (structures). Making basic actions more second nature allows for a focus on solving complex issues (system 2 thinking). This can reduce moral, mental, and physical demands.

AST also assists with developing leadership abilities and skills by allowing firefighters and officers to engage in AST processes such as communication with the property owners, creating a training plan, and overseeing training.

The operational environment is mentally taxing because operations often occur in a cloud of **uncertainty**. Often, personnel will find themselves in dangerous places facing unclear problems under extreme **time pressure**. **Good training will ease some of the burden** but cannot remove it altogether.

AST allows personnel to gain experience as professionals. This training is structured for skill improvement and safety as it occurs under the watchful eye of officers and instructors (depending on the complexity of the training plan).

Although the concern is that freelancing will result in injuries during AST, there is a bigger risk of untrained or poorly trained personnel getting seriously hurt during an incident. Particularly when the incident is low frequency/high risk. These issues can be overcome by the structure of the AST process and insuring accountability of the AST (BC, Officers and AST Manager).

This is why AST is imperative, it can decrease some uncertainty by enhancing decision-making in training in various environments and situations, all in a controlled environment that has checks and balances in place. The development of decision-making helps alleviate some of the time pressure constraints by falling back on lessons learned in training (reducing some issues involved with system 2 thinking (lack of experience to draw from)).

Operational Values

- Commitment to duty
- Respect for others and the organization
- Integrity

Realistic training is
an integral tool for
enhancing OV

Commitment to duty requires:

1. Being proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.
2. Making sound and timely decisions.
3. Ensuring tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished.
4. Knowing yourself and seeking improvement.

Leading training - Enhanced with realistic scenarios. Giving/receiving feedback during/after training. Making sure everyone improves and operates effectively as a team.

Respect for Others and the Organization requires:

1. Ensuring that people always come first.
2. Keeping a respect for the needs of those we serve in the forefront.
3. Knowing your subordinates, keeping them informed and looking out for their well-being.
4. Continually building the team at the unit, station, battalion, shift, and organizational levels.

Recognizing the need for training. Scheduling/leading training that improves the team.

Integrity requires:

1. Accepting responsibility for your actions.
2. Being a positive example.
3. Being honest.
4. Acting in the best interest of the team.

Ensuring the training plan and safety of personnel during training. Giving/receiving feedback during/after training. Making sure everyone improves and operates effectively as a team.

Operational Principles

- Commitment to service
- Effective leadership
- Scaled response
- Commitment to learning
- Balance

Commitment to service

There is a level of public trust and it is our collective duty to perform and behave at the highest levels of professionalism to maintain that level of trust. Personnel have interactions with the public and those interactions have a profound effect on the perception of MCFRS.

AST can enhance trust by recording and placing training on our website or inviting the public to certain training to show our deep commitment to being the best we can be by enhancing our training to a level that makes us the best we can be. The PIO can also help with this.

Effective leadership

Each incident requires effective leadership. Personnel at all levels of the organization have the opportunity to demonstrate leadership. There are attributes that effective leaders have in common:

- Decisive.
- Recognize the duty to act and act when action is required.
- Accountable for their actions.
- Refuse unnecessary risk but are not risk averse.
- Engaged in continuous learning.

The supervisor's intent refers to both the objective and the reason for the objective. Supervisors at all levels must make the intent of their orders clear. Operations must be directed toward a clearly defined and attainable objective.

The framework of AST allows for the development of these attributes. Starting with the communication and coordination of acquiring a training structure, to designating responsibilities to junior personnel, developing a training plan, developing a safety plan, carrying out the training, mitigating any issues that may arise before/during training, etc. The AST process and training helps develop leadership at all levels of the department, from officer lead training, to the use of level 1 and level 2 instructors.

Scaled response

Beginning at the time of dispatch the organization then relies on personnel to conduct assessments and make judgements. Based on defense in depth.

Defense in depth means that as the risk or complexity of an incident increases, the allocation of resources, the number of contingency plans, and the configuration of rapid intervention teams must also grow proportionately, scaling up or down to meet the needs of the incident.

The more realistic application of AST provides a great opportunity to practice such decisions on a scenario-based level within a safe environment.

Incident operations require teamwork and teamwork requires the subordination of selfish aims to the needs of the team. Effective teamwork is characterized by the ability to:

- Develop and communicate situational awareness.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the incident objectives and priorities.
- Provide assistance to others as necessary to support the incident objectives.
- Monitor team action and thought for errors and to correct them, as necessary.
- Use all available information resources.

The more realistic application of AST provides a great opportunity to practice the element of effective teamwork, not only by performing skills to complete objectives but also practicing good communications. This is enhanced through allowing feedback from each member of the team.

On-scene initiative

On-Scene Initiative- is action in the absence of orders, or in the presence of unforeseen opportunities or threats. At times during an incident there may be one person who is the only one in a position to see what needs to be done and to do it. Circumstances may not permit waiting for permission before the opportunity is lost or the threat materializes. The operational environment demands that all personnel be given sufficient latitude to act quickly and decisively within their scope of authority.

The more realistic application of AST provides a great opportunity to practice skills, decision-making, effective teamwork for all personnel. This will enhance the on-scene initiative of each person.

Managed Risk

Every incident has some degree of risk and all the risks will never be known. However, personnel are required to accept risk when the benefits outweigh the costs. The most logical choices for accomplishing a mission are those that meet all the mission requirements exposing personnel and resources to the lowest possible risk.

AST helps prepare for risks by scenario-based training indifferent types of structures. Differing structures allow a level of reality that cannot be achieved in the fixed structures at the PSTA. These structures are deemed safe prior to training based on the rigorous safety precautions of the AST program, which are based on good risk management principles.

Commitment to learning

MCFRS is a learning organization, which actively engages in critical self-analysis, the discovery and dissemination of lessons, and continual operational evolution. Engaging in critical evaluation, even after success, is vital to improvement. There is often more to learn from mistakes than from successes. Mistakes should be brought out into the open, discussed and shared in ways that are respectful of participants and that enhance the rapid transmission of lessons.

AST offers a realistic yet safe platform for this.

The purpose of all training is to develop personnel and teams that perform well under the adverse conditions that they are likely to face. Continual training is a key to operational success. Training exists on many levels and at each level there is a supervisor who must ensure that the training is appropriate and effective.

AST offers a realistic yet safe platform for this. The framework is designed to ensure ongoing safety and oversight while training in a more realistic fashion.

Balance

Emergency operations require balance in all respects and at all levels of the organization. Speed is a derivative of efficiency, which is a derivative of training.

We must choose the course of action that provides the quickest, most effective, and most efficient methods for ensuring the incident priorities and incident objectives are met using the resources that are on hand.

We must also recognize the need for additional resources and the need to adjust tactics when additional resources are available.

There must be a balance in planning. Plans must be proportional to the complexity of the incident, only prescribing what is absolutely necessary and leaving the initiative of subordinates intact as appropriate. A planning balance also speaks to the need to ensure an appropriate allocation of time spent planning in the present and time spent planning for the future.

There must be balance in communication. The Incident Commander must control the pace of events but must also realize that unit officers are communicating with their crew members or with civilians. While the Incident Commander must get reports from the assigned units and while they must be prepared to provide those reports, a balance must be struck between talking too much and not talking enough.

The highlighted areas can be greatly enhanced by AST. Making these actions more second nature helps balance the many responsibilities that go along with mitigating an incident.

Also, there is great value to the planning phase of AST. The planning process enhances the understanding of what it takes to plan based upon the complexity of training, which can transfer to an incident. It also ensures accountability and safety in the AST.

Operational Anchors

- Situational awareness - the walk through and training/safety plan
- Accountability - the training and safety plan, ensuring both plans are followed throughout the training.
- Safety - the walkthrough and safety plan
- Effective communications - the walk through, training/safety plan, training, and de-mob.

- Risk assessment - the walkthrough, safety plan, oversight to recognize and mitigate any issues that arise during the process/training and de-mob.
- Crew resource management - the walkthrough, safety plan, oversight to recognize and mitigate any issues that arise during the process/training, feedback during/after training.

The framework of AST, from acquiring a property to actual training, are based on the OAs.

Incident Strategies

- Offensive
- Defensive

AST helps practice and develop tactics.

Incident Priorities

- Life safety
- Incident stabilization
- Property conservation

AST helps practice and develop tactics.