



King County Fire Training Officer's Association Officer Development Academy Course Syllabus

The Art of Reading Smoke

Course Information

Course Title:	The Art of Reading Smoke
Course Description:	This one-day class is the most-popular Fire Officer decision-making class in the USA. Often, smoke issuing from a building is the only clue available to predict fire behavior and the likelihood of a flashover or rapid fire spread. First-arriving officers, Incident Commanders, and Safety Officers MUST know how to rapidly read smoke – this class explains the reading-smoke process and gives participants practice using actual fire-ground video.
Date:	March 30, 2012
Class Time:	0830-1630
Location:	TBA
Prerequisites/Pre-course Assignment:	Fire Department Affiliation
College Credits:	N/A

Instructor Information

Instructor:	Dave Dodson, Battalion Chief (ret.)
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Instructor Email:	davedodson@q.com
Instructor Contact:	Email: You may contact me by email at any time. Phone: Voice and/or Texting Messages accepted



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Instructor BIO: Chief Dodson is a 33-year fire service veteran – spending time as a Battalion Chief, Duty Safety Officer, and Emergency Manager for several Colorado Fire Departments. Chief Dodson continues to author and teach many firefighter safety topics including the popular “Reading Smoke” programs, First-Due decision-making, and Incident Safety Officer academies. He has served on several local and national boards including NFPA’s Occupational Safety and Health Technical Committee. In 1997, Dave was chosen as the ISFSI “George D. Post Fire Instructor of the Year.”

Course Design

Text: Course taken from the Reading Smoke chapter in the Delmar Book: *Fire Department Incident Safety Officer, 2E*, Dodson – 2007. Book is optional – but not required for course.

Additional Materials: Instructor-provided 11-page course handout

Course Objectives: **Goal:** To improve the participants’ ability to quickly judge fire conditions within a structure through the application of a “Reading Smoke” technique.

Objectives:

Upon completion of the full 8-hour class, the participant should be able to:

1. Describe the factors that have changed structural/content fire behavior in the last ten years.
2. List common hostile fire events and their associated warning signs.
3. List the four attributes of smoke.
4. Describe how each of the four smoke attributes contributes to the understanding of fire behavior within a building.



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5. List the 3-steps of the reading smoke process.

Course Policies: This course is designed to develop critical thinking skills requiring the students to participate in both classroom discussions and group projects. All students will respect the opinions of others and may debate in a manner that is respectful of all.

Attendance: All students should attend the full 8 hours. Failure to attend the full day may result in an incomplete grade.

Grading: Grading will be based on the following criteria:
Attendance/Participation in group scenarios - 100 percent

Final Grade will be either Pass or Incomplete with 70% or better used as passing.