

Running head: DEVELOPING A SELECTION CRITERIA AND JOB DESCRIPTION

Developing a Selection Criteria and Job Description for Personnel Assigned to a Rescue

Company

Donald Scott Shelton

Baton Rouge Fire Department, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Developing a Selection Criteria and Job Description for Personnel Assigned to a Rescue
Company

Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: _____

Abstract

This applied research project focused on developing a selection criteria and job description for personnel assigned to a rescue company. The problem is the Baton Rouge Fire Department does not have a selection criteria and job description for personnel assigned to a rescue company. The purpose of this research is to develop a selection criteria and job description for personnel assigned to a rescue company.

Action research was used to answer the following questions: a. What are the knowledge, skills and abilities required of rescue personnel? b. How have other fire departments implemented selection criteria for rescue company personnel? c. What are the benefits of utilizing a selection criteria and a job description for rescue companies in the Baton Rouge Fire Department? d. What training, tools and equipment will be needed based on the knowledge, skills and abilities? A survey, literature review and interviews were conducted to develop selection criteria and job descriptions for personnel assigned to rescue companies in the Baton Rouge Fire Department.

Fire departments are expected to deliver a service that encompasses an all hazards, all risk approach to rescue. No fire department can expect to safely and efficiently mitigate technical rescue situations unless it has a sufficient number of dedicated, capable and trained personnel. Due to the hazardous nature of this type of work, rescue personnel must be thoroughly trained and competent in areas such as incident command, risk management and the theory and use of rescue tools and equipment, among many others. It is recommended that the Baton Rouge Fire Department assign personnel to the rescue companies based on knowledge skills and abilities. It is also recommended that the Baton Rouge Fire Department have specific standard operating guidelines and procedures that apply to technical rescue.

Table of Contents

Certification Statement.....2

Abstract.....3

Table of Contents.....4

Introduction.....5

Background and Significance.....6

Literature Review.....10

Procedures.....19

Results.....22

Discussion.....30

Recommendations.....35

References.....36

Appendices

Appendix A: Transcripts for Personal Communications.....39

Appendix B: Survey Questions and Results.....44

Appendix C Job Description.....48

Appendix D Selection Criteria.....50

Introduction

It is interesting to note that the role of the fire service has evolved throughout the years into an all-risk, all-hazard service providing first responders to just about any emergency type imaginable. No longer strictly a fire service, fire departments now responds to all types of natural and technological disasters that require specialized tools, equipment and skill sets. These types of emergencies requiring rescue of civilians and sometimes other first responders typically fall to firefighters skilled in technical rescue.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1670 is the standard on technical rescue; it addresses seven (7) different rescue disciplines. They are as follows: (a) Structural Collapse (b) Rope Rescue (a) Confined Space Search and Rescue (d) Vehicle and Machinery Rescue (e) Water Search and Rescue (f) Wilderness Search and Rescue (g) Trench Evacuation Search and Rescue (NFPA 1670). These categories of rescues require knowledge and skill sets that the average firefighter does not possess.

The problem is the Baton Rouge Fire Department does not have a selection criteria and job description for personnel assigned to a rescue company. The purpose of this research is to develop a selection criteria and job description for personnel assigned to a rescue company.

To accomplish this objective and to answer the five following research questions action research methods were used. The research questions are: (a) What are the knowledge, skills and abilities required of rescue personnel? (b) How have other fire departments implemented selection criteria for rescue company personnel? (c) What are the benefits of utilizing a selection criteria and a job description for rescue companies in the Baton Rouge Fire Department? (d) What training, tools and equipment will be needed based on the knowledge, skills and abilities?

Background and Significance

The Baton Rouge Fire Department (BRFD) serves the city of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, which is in the southeast portion of the state. Baton Rouge is the state capital of Louisiana and its second largest city behind New Orleans. Baton Rouge is also the seat of local government for the Parish of East Baton Rouge. The city sits on the east bank of the Mississippi River and is home to the eighth largest deep water port by tonnage in the United States. Baton Rouge is also home to Exxon/Mobile Refinery the second largest refinery in the nation and the third largest in the world. Louisiana State University (LSU) and Southern University and A&M College System which is the only historically black university system in America are located in Baton Rouge and the students of these universities make up close to twenty-five percent of the population.

The city measures 77 square miles and its population is around 227,818. The population of East Baton Rouge Parish is 440,171 (Fact finder, 2010). The city has two river boat casinos, a large petrochemical corridor, is home to the highest state capitol building in the nation at thirty-four stories tall as well as eleven downtown high-rise buildings. The city also has heavy commercial, industrial and all other types of residential construction spread throughout the city.

The Baton Rouge Fire Department is a career municipal department that provides fire suppression, medical first response, technical rescue, hazmat response, arson investigation, and fire prevention and education. The BRFD currently employs 600 personnel and has an annual operating budget of \$54 million. The BRFD responded to 29,869 runs in 2011 (Baton Rouge Fire Department [BRFD], 2011). The BRFD operates out of 19 stations housing 19 engines, 9 ladder trucks, three service trucks, two technical rescue units and a hazardous materials unit.

Organizationally the BRFD is broken down into divisions. These divisions include suppression, training, safety, arson, hazmat, prevention/education, public information, communications, and special services. The suppression division is run by the chief of operations, he is assisted by three deputy chiefs who are responsible for personnel, discipline and equipment and facilities. The suppression division is broken down into three shifts A, B and C shifts. Each shift is run by an assistant chief. The city is divided into districts with a district chief supervising each district. Each shift has seven district chiefs, 35 captains, 40 fire equipment operators and 60 firefighters. The other divisions in the department are run by a deputy chief and an assistant chief.

Historically the Baton Rouge Fire Department has been a leader in the fire service. The BRFD was the first fire department in the nation to obtain an Insurance Service Organization (ISO) class one rating, which was first obtained in 1979. It was also the first to repeat the rigorous reevaluation in 1986 and retained its number one rating. In 2010 the BRFD again retained the rating. The BRFD was the first department in the nation to form a mutual response organization. In 1944 the BRFD brought together industry, public services and private business that were organized to support and aid each other in times of need. This organization is called Baton Rouge Area Mutual Aid System (Baton Rouge Area Mutual Aid Society [BRAMAS], n.d.).

Due to Baton Rouge's geographical location, it sits on the east bank of the Mississippi River and is located approximately 115 miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico; it is very susceptible to Gulf Coast weather systems such as hurricanes, tropical storms and tornadoes generated from these weather patterns. Baton Rouge sits on a bluff on the Mississippi River but much of the city and the southern part of the parish is in low lying areas and very susceptible to

flash flooding. Baton Rouge has had its share of natural and manmade disasters. Including a major explosion and fire at Exxon /Mobil Refinery in 1989, Hurricane Katrina in 2005 which brought a huge influx of refugees into the city and Hurricane Gustav which brought hurricane force winds of 100 mph. wide spread power outages and blocked roadways, due to damaged trees and power lines. All of these incidents were major disasters and were considered complex incidents due to the wide spread damage and damage to critical infrastructure. Baton Rouge is a large city with large areas of lower socioeconomic areas which are very susceptible to fires, shootings and mass casualty incidents. Baton Rouge is a major corridor for hazardous materials which are shipped by rail, water, air and roadways and in 2009 the BRFD hazmat unit was ranked by Firehouse magazine as the 46th busiest hazmat unit in the nation with a total of 180 hazmat responses (Firehouse Magazine Annual Run Report, 2011).

The BRFD is a seniority driven promotional system, where time in the department and a civil service test are the basis of promotion. This system has its advantages and disadvantages; some advantages are the officers in the department are mature, familiar with the system and the inner-workings of the department. One big disadvantage is assignments are based on seniority and not knowledge, skills and abilities. This is a crucial point when assignments are made to a rescue company due to the fact that these companies have special tools and equipment and are assigned emergency responses that will often fall outside of the knowledge skills and abilities of the average firefighter.

The two rescue units of the BRFD fall under the supervision of the suppression division and the rescue companies are staffed from this manpower pool. The rescue companies, as all engine and truck companies are, are staffed according to a bid system. The bid system is seniority based and the senior most individual that bids on an open spot in the rescue companies

can be assigned without regard to training or ability. The rescue companies divide the city roughly in half and combined the two companies' average 3400 - 3600 responses per year. The majority of these responses are for extrication at motor vehicle accidents but the rescue companies respond to fire calls, public assist calls, high angle and confined space rescue calls and all other forms of rescue responses beyond the capabilities of truck or engine companies due to the requirements of specialized tools and equipment. Currently the rescue companies are staffed with six individuals per shift, three on one company, and three on the other. The two rescue companies are staffed with an officer, driver and a firefighter. The BRFD is also the sponsoring agency for a regional response Urban Search and Rescue Team (USAR). This team known as, Task Force Two is also part of the State of Louisiana USAR response. This team specializes in structural collapse rescue, swift water/floodwater rescue and trench rescue. This team has been deployed numerous times since its inception in January of 2000, both locally, regionally, statewide and into neighboring states. Some of the more high profile responses were Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Gustav, and the Tuscaloosa, Alabama tornados. The personnel assigned to the rescue units are not required to be on the USAR team although a few of them are on the team. To be assigned to the USAR team an individual must meet certain physical requirements; pass a physical ability test and a medical clearance. After acceptance to the USAR team an individual must make seventy percent of the trainings offered or they are dismissed from the team. Being on the USAR team is considered collateral, voluntary duty and no one is assigned to the team full time. There are approximately sixty BRFD personnel on the USAR team at any one time. The majority of the USAR team members are trained to the technician level in multi-disciplines. The USAR Team and the rescue companies are operated independently of each other. This research effort correlates to the National Fire Academy's

operational objectives to respond to emerging issues within the fire service in an appropriate and timely manner. The fourth year course, Executive Leadership of the Executive Fire Officer's Program (EFOP) urges participants to conceptualize and employ the key processes used by effective executive level managers" (FEMA, 2005, p. v). This research addresses a concern within the BRFD and is consistent with the goals and objectives set forth by the United States Fire Administration and the established course objectives of the EFOP.

Literature Review

The literature review was conducted to investigate previous research and published material relating to the research questions of this Applied Research Project. The research data utilized was obtained from the National Fire Academy's Learning Resource Center, search engines from the World Wide Web, research published in books, periodicals, journals and magazines and other Executive Fire Officer Program Applied Research Papers. Several interviews were conducted as well as a survey to develop a job description and selection criteria for personnel assigned to a rescue company in the Baton Rouge Fire Department.

Emergency response agencies are often called upon to respond to incidents that fall into one of four categories, low risk/low frequency, low risk/high frequency, high risk/high frequency or high risk/low frequency. According to Gordon Graham, high risk/low frequency incidents have the "most potential to result in death, injury, civil liability, department embarrassment and bad publicity" (Graham, 2009). Responses that require technical rescue will almost always fall into the high risk/low frequency category. Technical rescue incidents are often complex, requiring specially trained personnel and special equipment to complete the mission (United States Fire Administration, 1995, p. i). Rescue problems are not going away and are starting to take more time and resources to mitigate. Rescue operations have been multiplying and

becoming more complex because of the growing population, increasing exposure to events that create a need for rescue, and rapid changes in technology and hazards associated with modes of transportation, equipment, chemicals and structure design (Bachtler & Brennan, 1995, p. 643).

In most fire departments certain firefighters gravitate toward the technical rescue teams. Due to the number of interested personnel most fire departments have selection criteria that look at personal attributes such as desire, physical fitness, mechanical aptitude, attitude, ingenuity and resourcefulness. Many fire departments have established medical requirements and physical fitness programs for their technical rescue teams. *NFPA 1582 Standard on Medical Requirements for Firefighters*, and *NFPA 1500 Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program* are typically the standards that these programs are based on as a reference (United States Fire Administration, 1995). Technical rescue team members by the very nature of the work must be physically fit in order to carry and manipulate heavy equipment, heavy sheeting and shoring devices. Physical strength is a must! Solid, trench rescue panels that weight as much as 175 pounds apiece must be carried sometimes over a considerable distance and then manhandled into position into a collapsed trench (Gargan, 2000). Physical agility is also a recommended trait as rescue personnel must often climb into and onto obstacles, debris piles, ladders, towers and all manner of structures in order to access victims. If physical toughness is desired then no less important is emotional stability. A trapped or entangled victim is a highly traumatic situation for personnel to respond to and deal with in the field. These types of situations can tax an individual to his emotional limits (Gargan). Resourcefulness and mechanical ability are desirable as most rescues are anything but textbook responses. The ability of rescue personnel to think on their feet can often mean the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful outcome. The ratio of training to actual field deployments in rescue is very high.

Many, many man hours of training go into any single field deployment. Rescue personnel must be thoroughly grounded in the following:

- Incident management
- Roles and duties of the rescue unit
- General operating guidelines
- Theory and use of the rescue tools and equipment
- Procedures for interacting with other organization

Every rescue team member should become thoroughly familiar with the capabilities, limitations and safe operation of every piece of equipment carried on the unit (Murnane, Fortney, & Connell, 2003).

There are currently three (3) National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards that apply to technical rescue. These standards represent the best practices and are a committee based consensus that is used as the standard reference for technical rescue. NFPA 1670 is the *Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Rescue Incidents*. The scope of this standard shall “identify and establish levels of functional capability for conducting operations at technical search and rescue incidents while minimizing threats to rescuers” (NFPA 2004 1.1.1). The standard also states “the requirements of this standard shall apply to organizations that provide response to technical search incidents” (NFPA 2004 1.1.2). The intent of NFPA 1670 is to assist the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) in: assessing a technical search and rescue hazard within the response area, identify the level of operational capability and establish operational criteria (NFPA 1.2.1). NFPA 1670 also establishes the three different levels the AHJ can determine it is to operate. These levels are technician level, operations level and awareness level. At the technician level it is necessary to “coordinate, perform and supervise technical search and rescue

incidents” (NFPA 4.1.2-3). This is the highest level of response and rescuers at this level should have the capability to act independently within an incident management system. At the operations level the rescuer should be able to “support and participate in technical search and rescue incidents” (NFPA 4.1.2-2). At the operational level the rescuer should be able to identify hazards, handle equipment and offer support. The last level and also the level with the least amount of offensive capability is the awareness level. At this level the rescuers should be able to take defensive steps to ensure responder and public safety and recognize the need for additional trained help. NFPA 1670 also identifies the seven different rescue disciplines. These disciplines are:

- Structural Collapse
- Rope Rescue
- Confined Space Search and Rescue
- Vehicle and Machinery Search and Rescue
- Water Search and Rescue
- Wilderness Search and Rescue
- Trench Evacuation Search and Rescue

NFPA 1006 is the standard for *Rescue Technician Professional Qualifications*. The scope for this standard's intent is to “establish the minimum job performance requirements necessary for fire service and other emergency personnel who perform technical rescue operations” (NFPA 1.1). The purpose of NFPA 1006 is to specify the minimum job performance requirements for service as a rescuer in an emergency response organization. Each of the listed performance objectives shall be performed safely, completely and in its entirety” (NFPA 1.3.1). In NFPA 1006 only rescue technician is identified and it only identifies the minimum job performance

requirements for the individual disciplines, becoming a technician in one level does not qualify you in another discipline of rescue. NFPA 1983 is the standard on *Life Safety Rope and Equipment for Emergency Services*. NFPA 1983 is a use standard and identifies safety limits in rescue rope and rope equipment used for rope rescue but this standard obviously has an impact on other disciplines of rescue because many if not all disciplines require use of rope in some instances.

Through the research of several different sources it was determined that the majority of fire departments or other public safety agencies that deploy technical rescue teams will use some type of selection criteria to place personnel into a rescue training program. This selection process will usually include a call for applicants, review of applicant qualifications, written and/or oral interviews, a physical fitness and /or a physical agility test. The applicants are screened for commitment, previous rescue training and experience and other skills adaptable for rescue such as carpentry, welding or electrical work. Training an applicant to operate on a technical rescue team takes many hours of training and a financial commitment from the department or public agency, because of this many departments or agencies require the potential rescuer to sign an agreement to remain on the team for an agreed upon period.

According to Christopher Feder, the first step in any rescue program is “an assessment of your department, membership and response district” (Feder, 2005, p. 1). The assessment used will help determine what type of technical rescue is most often needed and how much manpower maybe required. This assessment of the various aspects of your department will also play a large part in your selection criteria and job description. Most large, urban, paid departments will have a wider selection of personnel and can implement a stricter set of selection criteria and a stricter job description while smaller rural and volunteer departments do not have

the luxury of being choosy. Another important consideration according to Feder is an evaluation of financial support (Feder, 2005). The results of this type of evaluation will determine equipment purchases and training of personnel. These evaluations are how most departments use and develop job descriptions. A job description according to *Reference for Business.com* is “descriptions and specifications of known duties and responsibilities, required levels of education and work experience, salary and benefits provided to employees in exchange for their labor, and information regarding the work environment. Job descriptions also may include helpful details addressing other work-related issues, such as the position's travel obligations, normal work schedule, physical location where duties of position will be carried out, union status, supervisory relationships, bonuses, and any other information directly pertinent to the execution of any and all responsibilities associated with the job” (Staff, 2012, p. 1). The job description gives supervisors and managers a great reference as an evaluation tool to gauge performance of the individual team members. The Union Colony Fire/Rescue Authority in Greeley, Colorado list job descriptions for the majority of positions in their organization. The job descriptions will include a job summary, duties and responsibilities, essential knowledge, skills and abilities, qualifications and physical requirements (Union Colony Fire and Rescue Authority, 09/07). The City of Farmington Fire Department in New Mexico has a job description for a Technical Rescue Technician that breaks the job duties into essential and nonessential duties and also includes required qualifications (City of Farmington, NM, n.d.). The job descriptions in most departments will have a qualifications requirement. This requirement will usually stipulate how many years of service the candidate must have, the minimum level of medical training that is acceptable, and the required operator's license to operate fire department or agency vehicles.

The largest expense to any department or agency where technical rescue is concerned outside of salaries is the specialized tools and equipment of a technical rescue team. This equipment will include some type of rescue vehicle or heavy duty truck that can tow an equipment trailer. The rescue vehicles are broken down into categories such as heavy rescue, medium duty rescue and light duty rescue. Heavy rescue vehicles as the name applies are typically large fire/rescue apparatus with a body designed for technical rescue. This type of apparatus plus equipment will often run into a million dollars or more (United States Fire Administration, 1995). The medium duty rescue apparatus are typically heavy to medium duty truck chassis that are customized to carry the desired equipment. This type of apparatus is limited to the amount of equipment it can carry due to space issues. Light duty rescue vehicles are typically converted pick-up trucks, converted ambulances or vans. This type of apparatus is severely limited and will often only carry one type of specialized rescue equipment. An example would be water rescue where the truck tows a small boat and the needed equipment. Many departments or agencies have converted enclosed trailers where the different rescue equipment is divided by discipline. The same heavy to medium duty truck can pull the needed equipment to the incident based on the dispatch information. The East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office uses this option for their dive rescue and underwater recovery team. A sixteen foot, enclosed trailer contains all of the dive equipment needed for an extended operation (EBRPSO, 2011). Each equipment cache should start with the rescue team's personal protection equipment (PPE). Each discipline of technical rescue will require different PPE. The PPE needed for swift water rescue cannot be used for trench rescue. PPE for a rescue team that will practice several different disciplines can be a significant investment for a department or agency. This PPE is usually size dependant and individually maintained each member will typically be issued their

own PPE. Some examples would include helmets, gloves, goggles, knee pads, elbow pads, safety boots, coveralls, respiratory protection and a carry bag (Murnane et al., 2003). The equipment needed for each discipline is significant and some equipment can often be used for any discipline, while other equipment is discipline specific, some examples of equipment that is readily available and could be used for any incident are hand tools, rope, rope equipment, forcible entry tools such as halligan bars, sledge hammers, flat head axes and pry bars. Each of the seven disciplines of technical rescue will require equipment purchased specifically for that discipline. The purchase of equipment will be based on the type of rescue that the department will conduct; this is based on the needs analysis for that particular response area. Many departments have used the Assistance to Firefighter Grant Programs to buy equipment and train their personnel. The Assistance to Firefighter Grant Programs (AFGP) primary goal is to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical service organizations. Since 2001, AFGP has helped firefighters and other first responders to obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources needed to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards (FEMA, 2001).

Training the technical rescue team demands a strong commitment from the sponsoring department or agency and the team members. The training can be accomplished in several different ways. Training can be conducted in-house, through mutual agreement, by private for profit agencies or through associations. The late Ray Downey the Fire Department of New York Battalion Chief and well known speaker and writer on rescue issues said this about training, “It stands to reason that your success in developing a program will be contingent on your resources and the qualifications of the personnel conducting the training” (Downey, 1999, p. 2). Training

can either take place in your location or the team is sent off someplace other than your location to train, the latter being more expensive due to travel, lodging and back-fill or overtime pay that will drive the cost up. Similarly, the cost of instructors to conduct the training can get quite expensive. Using in-house instructors saves time and money. Often department or agencies will send willing individuals off to train-the-trainer schools with the agreement that they will train the rest of the team upon their return. Downy also said that:

Departments must preplan, train and gear themselves up for a variety of possible specialized rescue incidents. Our department (FDNY) responding to the need, addressed this issue by first appointing a committee of rescue specialist to review our procedures and make necessary recommendations for procedural changes but also include a recommendation to improve our operations. The committee not only made recommendations for procedural changes but also included a recommendation for specialized rescue training. The objective of training would be to develop an SOP for the various types of incidents and the operational procedures to be standardized (Downey, 1999).

Not all departments have the luxury of a pool of trained rescue specialist to form a committee but a committee formed of interested personnel to study the needs assessment, funding and personnel needs is a logical first step for most departments. Training is the most time intensive part of the technical rescue team. As team members are trained and gain practical experience in-house training that meets or exceeds the national standards should become the norm and the most cost effective way to train new team members.

Maintaining the knowledge skills and abilities of a technical rescue team is often an arduous task. Battalion Chief Robert Rhea of the Fairfax County (VA.) Fire and Rescue

Department said “to ensure that the rescue team remains state of the art, departments need to continually measure the teams capabilities while evaluating changes and trends in the field” (Rhea, 2006, p. 5). Examples of change would be new technology in rescue tools or equipment or new materials that auto manufactures will use in the production of new cars. This is a field where most departments are barely keeping up; it is in the constantly changing area of vehicle extrication. With the advent of electric cars and cars running on alternative fuel sources a department not keeping up with the auto industry changes faces real dangers. Continual and ongoing assessment and maintenance of the knowledge skills and abilities of a technical rescue team is critical, failure to do so put the rescue team at a pronounced risk. The inability of a team to improvise, think on its feet and use all available resources is crucial. Larry Collins says that “periodically, an incident comes along that compels public safety personnel to deviate from their normal repertoire of tactics, strategies and equipment. If they find themselves unable to adapt to quickly changing conditions they can find themselves in lethal danger—and quickly” (Collins, 2012, p. 1).

In this day and age, with the threat of foreign and domestic terrorist attacks both a constant possibility, natural and manmade disasters around every corner, the fire service can ill afford to be unprepared to respond to incidents where normal fire response will be inadequate. The public we serve expect more from us; it is our duty to not let them down. It is not a matter of if; it is a matter of when the next low frequency/ high risk incident will strike. Preparation for, responding to and recovery from, are key National Response Framework mandates that first responders must meet (FEMA 2011).

Procedures

The procedures utilized in this applied research project initiated with identifying a focused organizational problem that could potentially impact the Baton Rouge Fire Department (BRFD) and correlated with the goals and objectives of the NFA's Executive Leadership class. The problem identified was the fact that the BRFD does not have a selection criteria or a job description for personnel assigned to a rescue company. After the problem statement was developed the purpose statement and relevant research questions were designed to obtain focused information relating to the problem. Action research was used in this applied research project.

The first step of the research started with a survey of fire departments to determine if other departments utilized selection criteria and a job description and what if any qualifications or requirements were placed on the members of their rescue company personnel. The survey questions and feedback are presented in appendix A. The survey helped to identify the need for a selection criteria and a job description. The survey also helped to answer the research questions: (a) What are the knowledge, skills and abilities required of rescue personnel? (b) How have other fire departments implemented selection criteria for rescue company personnel? The next step in the process was personal communication with fire officers and other individuals who have worked with, on or have seen the need for competent technical rescue teams. The transcripts are included in appendix B. Thomas Townsend the team leader for Louisiana Urban Search and Rescue Task Force (USAR) Team Two (TF2) was interviewed to gain insight into how selection criteria and job descriptions have benefited the USAR team. Mr. Townsend is an USAR Instructor and team leader of a 70 person team. Mr. Townsend is also assigned to a rescue company in the BRFD. His unique perspective proved valuable in answering research questions (b) How have other fire departments implemented selection criteria for rescue

company personnel? (c) What are the benefits of utilizing a selection criteria and a job description for rescue companies in the Baton Rouge Fire Department? Company Officer Paul Pinsonat was interviewed. Captain Pinsonat is assigned to BRFD Rescue Company 94 and is also a squad leader for TF2. While a full time company officer for the BRFD, Mr. Pinsonat is also a fire chief for a volunteer fire department west of Baton Rouge, the Pointe Coupee Fire District 4 Fire Department. Mr. Pinsonat's unique perspective as a company officer and a chief of a department gave insight into selection criteria and also the purchasing of tools and equipment based on the knowledge skills and abilities of the rescue personnel. Mr. Pinsonat's input answered research questions; (c) What are the benefits of utilizing a selection criteria and a job description for rescue companies in the Baton Rouge Fire Department? (d) What training, tools and equipment will be needed based on the knowledge, skills and abilities? Chief James Wood was interviewed next. Chief Wood is the Fire Chief of West Feliciana Parish Fire Protection District One. This department is a combination fire department with nine fire stations and one hundred and ten personnel. Chief Wood was interviewed due to the fact that his department is a young and progressive department with written job descriptions and selection criteria written for all of his department's positions. Having firsthand knowledge of the development and use of both job descriptions and selection criteria, Chief Wood helped to answer research questions; (b) How have other fire departments implemented selection criteria for rescue company personnel? (c) What are the benefits of utilizing a selection criteria and a job description for rescue companies in the Baton Rouge Fire Department? (d) What training, tools and equipment will be needed based on the knowledge, skills and abilities? Captain Jason Graphia was interviewed due to the fact that he is a company officer on BRFD Rescue Company 94. Captain Graphia is also a High Angle and Confined Space Rope Rescue Instructor for a local

company that specializes in rope rescue instruction and is well known nationally and internationally. Captain Graphia's perspective answered research question; (a) What are the knowledge, skills and abilities required of rescue personnel?

The limitations of this research are that much of the information obtained by personal communications, which made up a large part of the research, is based on personal experience and circumstances, because of this the local or regional operating procedures maybe definitive to this particular area. This research focused on developing a selection criteria and a job description for personnel assigned to a rescue company for the BRFD. Because of the narrow focus only fire departments were surveyed to determine the need, use and development of a selection criteria and a job description. The research determined that the development of a selection criteria and a job description is well documented and nationally accepted standards are already in place for a selection criteria and a job description, because of this many sources consulted were identical to or referred back to the original FEMA sources. Where possible, seminal resources were sought but some resources used in this research are five years old or older. This is because some of the older resources used are still relevant to this subject matter such as the Technical Rescue Program Development Manual dated August of 1995 (FEMA 1995).

Results

Research question one: (a) What are the knowledge, skills and abilities required of rescue personnel? Through personal communications, interviews and research it was determined that many fire departments have established medical requirements and physical fitness programs for their technical rescue teams. *NFPA 1582 Standard on Medical Requirements for Firefighters*, and *NFPA 1500 Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program* are typically the standards that these programs are based on as a

reference (United States Fire Administration, 1995). Due to the stress, both physical and mental that technical rescue team members are often put under it is imperative to ensure that all team members are cleared medically and physically to participate. Physical strength as well as physical agility is recommended traits as rescue personnel must often climb into and onto obstacles, debris piles, ladders, towers and all manner of structures in order to access victims. If physical toughness is desired then no less important is emotional stability. A trapped or entangled victim is a highly traumatic situation for personnel to respond to and deal with in the field. These types of situations can tax an individual to his emotional limits (Gargan). Resourcefulness and mechanical ability are desirable as most rescues are anything but textbook responses. The ability of rescue personnel to think on their feet can often mean the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful outcome. Many, many man hours of training go into any single field deployment. Rescue personnel must be thoroughly grounded in the following:

- Incident management
- Roles and duties of the rescue unit
- General operating guidelines
- Theory and use of the rescue tools and equipment
- Procedures for interacting with other organization

Every rescue team member should become thoroughly familiar with the capabilities, limitations and safe operation of every piece of equipment carried on the unit (Murnane, Fortney, & Connell, 2003). Through personal communications with Captain Jason Graphia it was discussed that a team member be “good with their hands and be a competitive type A personality, it has been my experience that a person who is motivated by competition is ideal for rescue because failure to them is not an option” (J. Graphia, personal communication, 2012). It was also

discussed that personnel being considered for rescue has to have a love for training and be self motivated to maintain skills and equipment. The survey that was conducted as part of this research (the survey and survey results are included in appendix B) confirms that many of the traits listed above are highly desirable. The survey listed seven traits, these traits were physically fit, emotionally/mentally stable, medically cleared, mechanically inclined, prior rescue training, agile and experienced firefighter, out of seventy-three departments one hundred percent responded positively to these traits physically fit, emotionally/mentally stable, medically cleared, mechanically inclined, and experienced firefighter,

Research question two; (b) How have other fire departments implemented selection criteria for rescue company personnel? Through the research of several different sources it was determined that the majority of fire departments or other public safety agencies that deploy technical rescue teams will use some type of selection criteria to place personnel into a rescue training program. The survey results show that out of seventy-three departments that answered the survey, seventy-one departments used selection criteria and a job description or used one of the other. This selection process will usually include a call for applicants, review of applicant qualifications, written and/or oral interviews, a physical fitness and /or a physical agility test. The applicants are screened for commitment, previous rescue training and experience and other skills adaptable for rescue such as carpentry, welding or electrical work. Training an applicant to operate on a technical rescue team takes many hours of training and a financial commitment from the department or public agency, because of this many departments or agencies require the potential rescuer to sign an agreement to remain on the team for an agreed upon period.

According to Christopher Feder, the first step in any rescue program is “an assessment of your department, membership and response district” (Feder, 2005, p. 1). The assessment used will help determine what type of technical rescue is most often needed and how much manpower maybe required. This assessment of the various aspects of your department will also play a large part in your selection criteria and job description. Most large, urban, paid departments will have a wider selection of personnel and can implement a stricter set of selection criteria and a stricter job description while smaller rural and volunteer departments do not have the luxury of being choosy. Another important consideration according to Feder is an evaluation of financial support (Feder, 2005). The results of this type of evaluation will determine equipment purchases and training of personnel. These evaluations are how most departments use and develop job descriptions. Through personal communications with Mr. Thomas Townsend it was discussed that:

the objective of the selection criteria is to ensure first that the personnel are cleared medically to perform the task at hand; a medical physical form is part of the application package. The second part of the selection process is an agility test, this is done to ensure a potential team member can climb a ladder, lift heavy tools, has adequate balance and can tolerate confined spaces, all of which is a required part of USAR work. The third phase is an application process and interview; this is done to see what the potential team member has done in the past as far as training preparation and experience. The interview gives the team administrators an idea of the potential team member’s attitude and priorities on training, deployments and desires (T. Townsend, personal communication, June 11, 2012).

The Union Colony Fire/Rescue Authority in Greeley, Colorado list job descriptions for the majority of positions in their organization. The job descriptions will include a job summary, duties and responsibilities, essential knowledge, skills and abilities, qualifications and physical requirements (Union Colony Fire and Rescue Authority, 09/07). The City of Farmington Fire Department in New Mexico has a job description for a Technical Rescue Technician that breaks the job duties into essential and nonessential duties and also includes required qualifications (City of Farmington, NM, n.d.). The job descriptions in most departments will have a qualifications requirement. This requirement will usually stipulate how many years of service the candidate must have, the minimum level of medical training that is acceptable, and the required operator's license to operate fire department or agency vehicles. Through personal communications with Chief James Wood it was discussed that the more important the role of a key position or job is in his department the more complex and stricter the requirements and the selection criteria and job descriptions, to be more precise "the more authority and responsibility the job entails the more requirements for eligibility and the more detailed the job description" (J. Wood, personal communication, 2012). Chief Wood also went on to say that by the very high risk nature of technical rescue only proven responsible personnel should be assigned, the measure I like to use is do I want this person coming for me or my family in a rescue scenario.

Research question three; (c) What are the benefits of utilizing a selection criteria and a job description for rescue companies in the Baton Rouge Fire Department? A job description according to *Reference for Business.com* is "descriptions and specifications of known duties and responsibilities, required levels of education and work experience, salary and benefits provided to employees in exchange for their labor, and information regarding the work environment. Job descriptions also may include helpful details addressing other work-related issues, such as the

position's travel obligations, normal work schedule, physical location where duties of position will be carried out, union status, supervisory relationships, bonuses, and any other information directly pertinent to the execution of any and all responsibilities associated with the job” (Staff, 2012, p. 1). The job description gives supervisors and managers a great reference as an evaluation tool to gauge performance of the individual team members. Through personal communications with Thomas Townsend it was discussed that the job description is used for each position on the team, the job description lists the main broad duties and responsibilities of that position. It does two main things it allows the team member to learn what may be expected of them and as a team leader it allows me to match the right individual to that job, it also gives me a map of expectations for that position.

Continual and ongoing assessment and maintenance of the knowledge skills and abilities of a technical rescue team is critical, failure to do so put the rescue team at a pronounced risk. The inability of a team to improvise, think on its feet and use all available resources is crucial. Larry Collins says that “periodically, an incident comes along that compels public safety personnel to deviate from their normal repertoire of tactics, strategies and equipment. If they find themselves unable to adapt to quickly changing conditions they can find themselves in lethal danger—and quickly” (Collins, 2012, p. 1). Through personal communications with Chief Paul Pinsonat it was discussed that in the State of Louisiana there are civil service laws and rules that affect the fire service. The majority of fire department positions will have a job description and requirements for that position. The requirements are usually seniority based with more emphasis put on years of service rather than skills or qualifications. The fire departments governed by civil service, use these job descriptions and requirements to maintain promotional eligibility list and do a good job of it for the most part. Chief Pinsonat also said to his knowledge there is not a

civil service classification for rescue personnel so it is up to individual departments to define selection criteria (P. Pinsonat, personal communications, 2012). Chief James Wood added that the selection criteria for a rescue position only make sense. It is a form of protection for the fire department to ensure that a person physically, mentally and emotionally stable are capable of doing the job and beginning the training process (J. Wood, personal communications, 2012).

Research question four; (d) What training, tools and equipment will be needed based on the knowledge, skills and abilities? The largest expense to any department or agency where technical rescue is concerned outside of salaries is the specialized tools and equipment of a technical rescue team. This equipment will include some type of rescue vehicle or heavy duty truck that can tow an equipment trailer. The rescue vehicles are broken down into categories such as heavy rescue, medium duty rescue and light duty rescue. Each equipment cache should start with the rescue team's personal protection equipment (PPE). Each discipline of technical rescue will require different PPE. The PPE needed for swift water rescue cannot be used for trench rescue. PPE for a rescue team that will practice several different disciplines can be a significant investment for a department or agency. This PPE is usually size dependant and individually maintained each member will typically be issued their own PPE. Some examples would include helmets, gloves, goggles, knee pads, elbow pads, safety boots, coveralls, respiratory protection and a carry bag (Murnane et al., 2003). The equipment needed for each discipline is significant and some equipment can often be used for any discipline, while other equipment is discipline specific, some examples of equipment that is readily available and could be used for any incident are hand tools, rope, rope equipment, forcible entry tools such as halligan bars, sledge hammers, flat head axes and pry bars. Each of the seven disciplines of technical rescue will require equipment purchased specifically for that discipline. The purchase

of equipment will be based on the type of rescue that the department will conduct; this is based on the needs analysis for that particular response area. Many departments have used the Assistance to Firefighter Grant Programs to buy equipment and train their personnel. The Assistance to Firefighter Grant Programs primary goal is to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical service organizations. Since 2001, AFG has helped firefighters and other first responders to obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources needed to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards (FEMA, 2001).

Training the technical rescue team demands a strong commitment from the sponsoring department or agency and the team members. The training can be accomplished in several different ways. Training can be conducted in-house, through mutual agreement, by private for profit agencies or through associations. The late Ray Downey the Fire Department of New York Battalion Chief and well known speaker and writer on rescue issues said this about training, “It stands to reason that your success in developing a program will be contingent on your resources and the qualifications of the personnel conducting the training” (Downey, 1999, p. 2). Training can either take place in your location or the team is sent off someplace other than your location to train, the latter being more expensive due to travel, lodging and back-fill or overtime pay that will drive the cost up. Similarly, the cost of instructors to conduct the training can get quite expensive. Using in-house instructors saves time and money. Often department or agencies will send willing individuals off to train-the-trainer schools with the agreement that they will train the rest of the team upon their return. Downey also said that:

Departments must preplan, train and gear themselves up for a variety of possible specialized rescue incidents. Our department (FDNY) responding to the need, addressed

this issue by first appointing a committee of rescue specialist to review our procedures and make necessary recommendations for procedural changes but also include a recommendation to improve our operations. The committee not only made recommendations for procedural changes but also included a recommendation for specialized rescue training. The objective of training would be to develop an SOP for the various types of incidents and the operational procedures to be standardized (Downey, 1999).

Not all departments have the luxury of a pool of trained rescue specialist to form a committee but a committee formed of interested personnel to study the needs assessment, funding and personnel needs is a logical first step for most departments. Training is the most time intensive part of the technical rescue team. As team members are trained and gain practical experience in-house training that meets or exceeds the national standards should become the norm and the most cost effective way to train new team members.

Maintaining the knowledge skills and abilities of a technical rescue team is often an arduous task. Battalion Chief Robert Rhea of the Fairfax County (VA.) Fire and Rescue Department said “to ensure that the rescue team remains state of the art, departments need to continually measure the teams capabilities while evaluating changes and trends in the field” (Rhea, 2006, p. 5). Examples of change would be new technology in rescue tools or equipment or new materials that auto manufactures will use in the production of new cars. This is a field where most departments are barely keeping up is in the constantly changing area of vehicle extrication. With the advent of electric cars and cars running on alternative fuel sources a department not keeping up with the auto industry changes faces real dangers. Continual and ongoing assessment and maintenance of the knowledge skills and abilities of a technical rescue

team is critical, failure to do so put the rescue team at a pronounced risk. The inability of a team to improvise, think on its feet and use all available resources is crucial. Larry Collins says that “periodically, an incident comes along that compels public safety personnel to deviate from their normal repertoire of tactics, strategies and equipment. If they find themselves unable to adapt to quickly changing conditions they can find themselves in lethal danger—and quickly” (Collins, 2012, p. 1). Through personal communications with Chiefs Pinsonat and Wood it was confirmed that the Assistance to Firefighter Grant Programs has been a tremendous boost to fire departments around the country in not only the field of rescue but every aspect of emergency operations. Most fire departments pursue these grants vigorously and both chiefs confirm they have both personally witnessed the benefits in the areas of training and equipment (Personal communications P. Pinsonat J. Wood). The survey results again confirm that the above statements are correct; all departments surveyed used a combination of in-house, outside agencies and mutual agreements to help train their personnel for rescue.

Discussion

The results of this research survey and interviews indicate that a selection criteria and job description are common management tools and are in wide use. These tools are used as forms of protection, evaluation and on-going assessment. A job description according to *Reference for Business.com* is “descriptions and specifications of known duties and responsibilities, required levels of education and work experience, salary and benefits provided to employees in exchange for their labor, and information regarding the work environment. Job descriptions also may include helpful details addressing other work-related issues, such as the position's travel obligations, normal work schedule, physical location where duties of position will be carried out, union status, supervisory relationships, bonuses, and any other information

directly pertinent to the execution of any and all responsibilities associated with the job” (Staff, 2012, p. 1). The job description gives supervisors and managers a great reference as an evaluation tool to gauge performance of the individual team members. The Union Colony Fire /Rescue Authority in Greeley, Colorado list job descriptions for the majority of positions in their organization. The job descriptions will include a job summary, duties and responsibilities, essential knowledge, skills and abilities, qualifications and physical requirements (Union Colony Fire and Rescue Authority, 09/07). The City of Farmington Fire Department in New Mexico has a job description for a Technical Rescue Technician that breaks the job duties into essential and nonessential duties and also includes required qualifications (City of Farmington, NM, n.d.). The job descriptions in most departments will have a qualifications requirement. This requirement will usually stipulate how many years of service the candidate must have, the minimum level of medical training that is acceptable, and the required operator’s license to operate fire department or agency vehicles. Chief James Wood added that the selection criteria for a rescue position only make sense. It is a form of protection for the fire department to ensure that a person physically, mentally and emotionally stable are capable of doing the job and beginning the training process (Personal communications J. Wood).

Technical rescue response will most often require knowledge, skills and abilities outside of a regular or normal response; this includes more often than not tools and equipment the normal fire apparatus does not carry. The NFPA 1670 recognizes seven different disciplines of technical rescue response. These disciplines are:

- Structural Collapse
- Rope Rescue
- Confined Space Search and Rescue

- Vehicle and Machinery Search and Rescue
- Water Search and Rescue
- Wilderness Search and Rescue
- Trench Evacuation Search and Rescue

Each discipline will require different tools and equipment as well as knowledge, skills and abilities. The ultimate goal of a selection process is to ensure personnel assigned to rescue companies have the physical ability, mental capacity and mechanical aptitude to perform at the high level that technical rescue requires. This is a safety as well as a liability issue. The inability of a team to improvise, think on its feet and use all available resources is crucial. Larry Collins says that “periodically, an incident comes along that compels public safety personnel to deviate from their normal repertoire of tactics, strategies and equipment. If they find themselves unable to adapt to quickly changing conditions they can find themselves in lethal danger—and quickly” (Collins, 2012, p. 1).

The starting point for the development of a selection criteria and a job description should start with an assessment, according to Christopher Feder, the first step in any rescue program is “an assessment of your department, membership and response district” (Feder, 2005, p. 1). The assessment used will help determine what type of technical rescue is most often needed and how much manpower maybe required. This assessment of the various aspects of your department will also play a large part in your selection criteria and job description. Most large, urban, paid departments will have a wider selection of personnel and can implement a stricter set of selection criteria and a stricter job description while smaller rural and volunteer departments do not have the luxury of being choosy. Another important consideration according to Feder is an evaluation of financial support (Feder, 2005). The results of this type of evaluation will determine

equipment purchases and training of personnel. These evaluations are how most departments use and develop job descriptions. A selection criteria based on the job description ensures that a capable person with the desired traits for that position is selected based on a set standard. The standard is not lowered, waved or put aside for any reason. In this way the department is protected and the public is ensured that a reasonably competent person has the opportunity to serve.

The implications of not using selection criteria for personnel assigned to rescue companies have the potential to be far reaching. The luxury of having a selection criteria screening potential problems from the rescue companies puts the department at a reduced risk of liability, increases the safety of rescue personnel and the public and creates an appeal to firefighters who want to be a part of something elite. A job description is an excellent management tool to evaluate the rescue companies and ensure continuing education, new techniques and new tools keep pace with technology. The job description and its use as an evaluation tool also reduce the department's liability and increase the safety of rescuers and the public. Technical rescue is a low frequency/high risk response that requires a different skill set, knowledge and abilities. Unless these traits are sought and refined the unscreened personnel put into this type of situation are being set up for potential failure. According to Gordon Graham, high risk/low frequency incidents have the "most potential to result in death, injury, civil liability, department embarrassment and bad publicity" (Graham, 2009).

Recommendations

This Applied Research Project studied the development of a selection criteria and a job description for personnel assigned to rescue companies. It was discovered through this research that selection criteria and job descriptions are common management tools already in place in the

BRFD. The majority of positions in the BRFD have civil service selection criteria and job descriptions already assigned. In departments where positions are not covered by civil service the department can enact selection criteria and job descriptions. It is recommended that the BRFD start with an assessment of the technical rescue program, according to Christopher Feder, the first step in any rescue program is “an assessment of your department, membership and response district” (Feder, 2005, p. 1). This assessment should start with a survey of personnel training records, certifications, tools and equipment and types and numbers of responses. At this time due to the way rescue responses are tracked it is not possible to get an accurate assessment of technical rescue response in the BRFD. The short term recommendation is to reevaluate how rescue responses are tracked and documented. This will add to the accuracy of the rescue assessment. The BRFD sponsorship of USAR Task Force 2 and the fact that the majority of team personnel come from the BRFD could be a huge benefit to the rescue companies. The task force already has selection criteria in place as well as a medical screening and agility test. Although the two are technically separate a few members serve dual roles, this is a benefit to the task force as well as the rescue companies. The second recommendation is to use the USAR Task Force 2 team members as a resource pool for potential rescue company members and require all team members and rescue personnel to be trained to the same high levels. All task force members who meet the selection criteria and job description for rescue personnel could be used as relief personnel or extra personnel during surge operations or prolonged rescues that evolve into multiple operational periods. In this way you avoid putting untrained, unscreened personnel on a rescue company and the department reduces its civil liability and puts the rescue personnel and the public at less risk. The third recommendation is to enact a selection criteria and job description for the personnel assigned to rescue companies and use these great

management tools to ensure the rescue companies stay at a high degree of readiness when those low frequency/high risk events come along. The fourth and final recommendation is to have specific standard operating guidelines and procedures that apply to technical rescue put into effect.

The research for this project is easily replicated, due to the fact that job description and selection criteria are widely used and practiced all across the fire service, as is common rescue practices. The *Technical Rescue Program Development Manual* has been around since 1995 and is an excellent resource for any department currently practicing rescue. No research material proved contradictory to common and approved methods for using selection criteria and job descriptions. Only regional differences that apply to expected need and manpower issues would vary the type of research.

References

- Bachtler, J. R., & Brennan, T. F. (1995). Rescue Operations. *The Fire Chief's Handbook* (pp. 643-643). Saddle Brook, New Jersey: Fire Engineering.
- Baton Rouge Area Mutual Aid Society (n.d.). *BRAMAS*. Retrieved 2011, from <http://BRAMAS.brgov.com>
- Baton Rouge Fire Department. (2011). *BRFD Annual Run Report* (BRFD). Baton Rouge, La.:
- City of Farmington, NM. (n.d.). *Job Title Technical Rescue Technician* [Data file]. Available from: <http://www.cityof farminton.ci.us>
- Collins, L. (2012). Unusual Tools for Unusual Rescue Calls. *Fire Engineering*. Retrieved from <http://www.fireengineering.com/articles/print/volume-152 issue 6>
- Downey, R. (1999). Specialized Rescue Training. *Fire Engineering*, 1-5.
- EBRPSO (2011). *Dive /Rescue*. Retrieved 2012, from <https://ebrso.ci.la>
- FEMA (2001). *Assistance to Firefighter Grants*. Retrieved 2012, from <http://www.fema.gov/welcome-assistance-firefighter-grants>
- Factfinder (2010). *Census 2010*. Retrieved 2012, from <http://www.factfinder.com>
- Feder, C. (2005). Implementing a Technical Rescue Program. *Fire Engineering*. Retrieved from <http://www.fireengineering.com/articles>
- Firehouse Magazine Annual Run Report (2011). *Firehouse Magazine*, .
- Gargan, J. B. (2000). *Trench Rescue*. St. Louis MO.: Mosby Inc.
- Graham, G. (Speaker). (2009). *Gordon Graham Risk Management* [Youtube]. : .
- Murnane, L., Fortney, J., & Connell, T. (2003). *Technical Rescue for Structural Collapse* (1st ed.). Stillwater, Oklahoma: International Fire Service Training Association.
- Rhea, R. (2006). Birth of a Rescue Team. *Fire Chief*, 1-7.

Staff (2012, 01/29/2012). Job Description. *Reference for Business, Encyclopedia of Business 2nd Edition*. Retrieved from <http://www.reference for business.com>

Union Colony Fire and Rescue Authority. (09/07). *Administrative Regulations* [Data file]. Available from Union Colony Fire/Rescue Authority: <http://www.ci.greeley.co.us>

United States Fire Administration (1995). *Technical Rescue Program Development Manual* (Federal Emergency Management Agency). Washington, D.C.:

Appendix A

Personal Communications

Thomas Townsend

The first of the interviews took place in my office on June 11, 2012. . Mr. Townsend is an USAR Instructor and team leader of a 70 person team. Mr. Townsend is also assigned to a rescue company in the BRFD. Mr. Townsend has had the opportunity to use a selection criteria and a job description to assign personnel to a USAR team.

Scotty Shelton (SS) For the record please state your name and position?

Thomas Townsend (TT) I am Thomas Townsend, I am the Task Force Leader for USAR Task Force 2(TF2) and a Fire Equipment Operator on Rescue 93 Baton Rouge Fire Department.

(SS) The USAR team uses selection criteria, why is this done and where did it come from?

(TT) TF2 is part of the state USAR team; this team is made up of three other regional teams that make up the state system. The teams came together and used a selection criteria created by one of the regional teams. The objective of the selection criteria is to ensure first that the personnel are cleared medically to perform the task at hand; a medical physical form is part of the application package. The second part of the selection process is an agility test, this is done to ensure a potential team member can climb a ladder, lift heavy tools, has adequate balance and can tolerate confined spaces, all of which is a required part of USAR work. The third phase is an application process and interview; this is done to see what the potential team member has done in the past as far as training preparation and experience. The interview gives the team administrators an idea of the potential team member's attitude and priorities on training, deployments and desires.

(SS) The team also uses job descriptions can you touch on this?

(TT) The jobs descriptions are used for each position on the team, the job description list the main broad duties and responsibilities of that position. It does two main things it allows the team member to learn what may be expected of them and as a team leader it allows me to match the right individual to that job, it also gives me a map of expectations for that position.

Personal Communications

Captain Jason Graphia

The next interviews took place in my office on June 14, 2012. Captain Jason Graphia of the Baton Rouge Fire Department was interviewed to get his unique perspective on the research questions for this research project. Captain Graphia is a seventeen year veteran of the fire service having served the last three as a captain on a rescue company. Captain Graphia is also a member of the USAR Task Force 2 and a High Angle and Confined Space Rope rescue Instructor. The transcript follows.

Scotty Shelton (SS) For the record please state your name and position.

Jason Graphia (JG) Jason Graphia, Captain Baton Rouge Fire Department Rescue 94.

(SS) Captain Graphia in your opinion, what knowledge skills and abilities are required of rescue personnel? “Be good with their hands and be a competitive type A personality, it has been my experience that a person who is motivated by competition is ideal for rescue because failure to them is not an option, anyone being considered for rescue has to have a love for training and be self motivated to maintain skills and equipment. As a rescue captain I should not have to motivate someone to train, they should be bugging me to train. I also like someone who has done construction work, either before they come into the fire service as a apart-time job. Much

of rescue is working with and manipulating tools, cutting metal, running small gas engines so construction skills are just a good fit.

(SS) Any other skill sets you prefer?

(JG) Now that I think about it, someone who has at least EMT level medical training, sometimes people who are entrapped or in a small area need medical treatment before we can extricate them and sometimes we are the only ones who can access them immediately.

Personal Communications

Chief James Wood

Chief James Wood is the Fire Chief of the West Feliciana Parish Fire District 1. This department is a combination fire department with nine fire stations and one hundred and ten personnel. Chief Wood was interviewed due to the fact that he has significant training in technical rescue, including structural collapse, swift water/floodwater rescue and vehicle and mechanical rescue. He is also a member of USAR Task Force 2.

(SS) For the record please state your name and position

James Wood (JW) I am James Wood, Fire Chief of the West Feliciana Fire Protection District 1.

(SS) As a fire chief have you written or do you use selection criteria or job descriptions?

(JW) Yes to both, when I took over this position initially, the only job description for any position in this department was for the position of fire chief. I had to write or help write all of the job descriptions and selection criteria that we now use in this department. The more responsibility the position entailed and the more key role the position was in this department the more complex and stricter the selection criteria and the job descriptions, to be more precise the

more authority and responsibility the job entails the more the requirements for eligibility and the more detailed the job description.

(SS) Chief how do you think this applies to rescue?

(JW) By the very high risk nature of rescue, only proven responsible personnel should be assigned, the measure I like to use is do I want this person coming for me or my family in a rescue scenario.

(SS) What are the benefits of using a selection criteria and a job description for rescue personnel?

(JW) Having a job description and a selection criteria for rescue only makes sense, it is a form of protection for the department to ensure that a person physically, mentally and emotionally prepared and stable are capable of doing the job and beginning the training process.

(SS) Chief as you know there are multiple disciplines of technical rescue, what tools and equipment is needed for rescue?

(JW) No way to answer that question in one sitting, although the majority of departments will typically have extrication equipment and at minimum some rope equipment even the small volunteer departments. The FEMA grant programs have helped tremendously in helping smaller combination departments like mine keep and maintain equipment.

Personal Communications

Chief Paul Pinsonat

Chief Pinsonat is Chief of the Pointe Coupee Fire District 4 and a Captain with the Baton Rouge Fire Department. Chief Pinsonat has served on the rescue companies and as team leader for USAR Task Force 2.

(SS) As a fire chief have you written or do you use selection criteria or job descriptions?

Paul Pinsonat (PP) Yes I have for my own department which is not governed by civil service laws. The BRFD which is covered by fire and police civil service already has selection criteria or job descriptions already in place for most if not all positions. The requirements are usually seniority based with more emphasis put on years of service rather than skills or qualifications. The fire departments governed by civil service, use these job descriptions and requirements to maintain promotional eligibility list and do a good job of it for the most part. To my knowledge there is not a civil service classification for rescue personnel so it is up to individual departments to define selection criteria and job descriptions.

(SS) Chief as you know there are multiple disciplines of technical rescue, what tools and equipment is needed for rescue?

(PP) Too many to name here, when I was the task force team leader we had over a million dollars tied up in tools and equipment, much of it bought with FEMA grant money. A lot of the equipment used in rescue can be found on engines and or trucks. Forcible entry tools, saws, hand tools. But the majority of them are specialized and expensive. The FEMA Grant Program for Firefighters has been great for the fire service in my own department we have purchased new SCBAs and other equipment and got some specialized training through this funding. The program is popular and fire departments are in the process of pursuing the grants at every opportunity.

Appendix B

Survey Questions and Results

1. What is the size of your department?

- a. 0-100
- b. 100-300
- c. 300-600
- d. 600- above

2. What type of a department category fits your department?

- a. Paid/ career
- b. Volunteer
- c. Combination

3. Does your department have a technical rescue company or companies?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Other

4. Does your department require a selection criteria or job description for personnel assigned to rescue?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Job description only
- d. Selection criteria only

5. In your opinion please select all the desired traits of personnel assigned to rescue.

- a. Physically fit
- b. Emotionally/mentally stable
- c. Medically cleared
- d. Mechanically inclined
- e. Prior rescue training
- f. Agile
- g Experienced firefighter

6. Does your department train personnel before they are assigned to a rescue company?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. n/a

7. Do you assign personnel to a rescue company as they are being trained?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. n/a

8. Where does the training for your rescue company come from, check all that apply?

- a. in-house
- b. outside agencies
- c. other department/mutual agreements
- d. contract instructors

Survey Results

The survey results were not a surprise based on the literature review and the interviews. It confirmed the overall results that job descriptions and selection criteria are common management tools used in the fire service and the majority of fire departments use both or one of the other. Seventy- three (73) departments responded to the survey.

1. What is the size of your department?

- a. 0-100 43 departments
- b. 100-300 19 department
- c. 300-600 11 departments
- d. 600- above 1 department

2. What type of a department category fits your department?

- a. Paid/ career 18 departments
- b. Volunteer 34 departments
- c. Combination 21 departments

3. Does your department have a technical rescue company or companies?

- a. Yes 43 departments
- b. No 0 departments
- c. Other 30 departments

4. Does your department require a selection criteria or job description for personnel assigned to rescue?

- a. Yes 26 departments
- b. No 2 departments
- c. Job description only 22 departments
- d. Selection criteria only 23 departments

5. In your opinion please select all the desired traits of personnel assigned to rescue.

- a. Physically fit 73 departments
- b. Emotionally/mentally stable 73 departments

- c. Medically cleared 73 departments
- d. Mechanically inclined 73 departments
- e. Prior rescue training 64 departments
- f. Agile 52 departments
- g Experienced firefighter 73 departments

6. Does your department train personnel before they are assigned to a rescue company?

- a. Yes 73 departments
- b. No
- c. n/a

7. Do you assign personnel to a rescue company as they are being trained?

- a. Yes
- b No 73 departments
- c. n/a

8. Where does the training for your rescue company come from, check all that apply?

- a. in-house 73 departments
- b. outside agencies 73 departments
- c. other department/mutual agreements 73 departments
- d. contract instructors 36 departments

Appendix C

**Job Description for Rescue Personnel
Baton Rouge Fire Department**

Job Title: Rescue Personnel

Division: Suppression

Job Duties

ESSENTIAL DUTIES:

Works as a member of the Technical Rescue Team under the direction of a team leader or Incident Commander.

Uses highly technical and specialized equipment for the rescue, stabilization, and mitigation of emergencies involving structural collapse, rope rescue, confined space, vehicle and machinery, water, wilderness search and rescue, trench and excavation, and other specialized and technical rescues.

Operates specialized tools, instruments, and communications equipment.

Attend all required team meetings.

Participate as a member of the EBR USAR Task Force 2

Assists in the training of Baton Rouge Fire Department personnel.

Assists in the training of local industry and East Baton Rouge Parish Emergency Service personnel.

Inspects, maintains, and repairs special technical rescue equipment.

Maintains a variety of records and data regarding specialized and technical rescue equipment.

Must attend twenty-four (48) hour team refresher training each year.

NON-ESSENTIAL DUTIES:

On occasion serve on various committees.

Obtain the ability to operate large motorized fire apparatus.

May be assigned to, or assist with special projects as directed.

The duties listed above are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position

Appendix D

**Selection Criteria for Rescue Personnel
Baton Rouge Fire Department**

Job Title: Rescue Personnel

Division: Suppression

Selection Criteria

Must have completed at least five (5) years as a firefighter in good standing with the Baton Rouge Fire Department at the time of selection.

Must be a Nationally Registered Emergency and Louisiana State Certified EMT-B (Emergency Medical Technician B Basic).

Must have a valid driver's license.

Must pass the USAR Task Force 2 agility test.

Must pass the annually medical screening with no medical restrictions.

Must attend and successfully complete confined space and rope rescue training and vehicle and machinery extrication to meet the requirements of the technician level specified in the National Fire Protection Association's Standard 1670 before assignment.

No disciplinary actions in the past three years.