

HOT SEATS

Quint Apparatus Standard Riding Positions

Quints have gained significantly in popularity in the American Fire Service in the past 15 years. St. Louis, MO and Richmond, VA notably switched their entire fleets to quint apparatus, while other major cities operate one or more quints. Quints have become particularly popular in volunteer and combination departments, where qualified drivers may be at a premium and it is vital for the few initial apparatus that does get out to have all of the tools necessary to battle what may face them on arrival.

Past articles (Firefighters News, Aug./Sept. 1996; Oct./Nov. 1996; and Dec/Jan 1996/97) have addressed standard riding position assignments for engine companies, ladder companies, and rescue companies. Having standard riding position assignments creates a mini-Incident Command System for personnel riding on these apparatus allowing clear expectations and rapid setup at an emergency scene. To aid departments that may have recently placed quint apparatus in service, this column will provide guidance on suggested riding assignments for quints.

Wherever possible, most fire officers would like quints to be able to perform multiple tasks on the fireground. In practicality, it will only be possible for the apparatus to perform more than one task simultaneously if properly manned. If manning is four firefighters or less, it is likely that the quint will initially only be able to perform as an engine company or a ladder company. If manning is five, preferably six or more, the quint will be much more likely to perform both engine and ladder operations at the same time. To meet the needs of as many departments as possible, suggested riding positions for both four and six man companies are provided.

6-Man Quint Company Riding Assignments

On the 6-man quint, there are two teams, the engine operations team (E team) and the ladder operations team (L team). These teams assume that the quint will perform both engine and ladder functions at a structural fire. This arrangement assumes that all 6 personnel are SCBA-qualified.

6-Man Quint Company	
Driver	Officer
E-2	E-1
L-1	H/L-2

DRIVER:

- Pump operations/all hookups to vehicle pump
- Scene lighting
- Logistics (equipment/inventories)
- Aerial Operations including all electrical and master stream operations and safety for personnel operating on the aerial.

OFFICER:

- Command
- Personnel accountability
- Radio communications
- SCBA
- Tools: portable radio; handlight; small hand tool; and monitoring equipment (CO/LEL meter) as needed

TEAM MEMBER E-1 (Engine Ops team – officer’s side rear-facing seat):

- Attack line nozzleman
- SCBA
- Handlight

TEAM MEMBER E-2 (Engine Ops team – driver’s side rear-facing seat):

- Attack line back-up man (team leader)
- SCBA
- Irons/Hand tool
- Radio

TEAM MEMBER L-1 (Ladder Ops team – driver’s side forward-facing seat):

- Vent/enter/search (team leader)
- Ladder building (if appropriate)
- SCBA
- Thermal imager
- Hand-held hydraulic forcible entry tool
- Handlight/radio

TEAM MEMBER H/L-2 (Hydrant/Ladder Ops team – officer’s side forward-facing seat):

- Hit hydrant (if appropriate)
- Ladder building (if appropriate)
- Join vent/enter/search effort
- SCBA
- Short pike pole
- Handlight/radio

Should extra personnel be available, they could perform the hydrant duty alone, freeing up the L-2 position to perform ladder company duties immediately. Should the quint be directly supported by an additional ladder company, the ladder team could function as an engine team, providing backup hoseline support to the initial engine team. Likewise, if the quint is performing solely as a ladder, the engine team can split the ladder duties, possibly performing exterior/roof vent duties while the initial ladder team performs interior ladder company support.

4-Man Quint Company Riding Assignments

The 4-man quint will likely only be able to perform one duty at a time. Therefore, one team is designated – the quint team. The quint team is flexible, as these firefighters may act as an engine or ladder company depending on their duties on the particular alarm assignment. This arrangement assumes that all 4 personnel are SCBA-qualified.

4-Man Quint Company

Driver	Officer
Q-2	Q-1

DRIVER:

- Pump operations/all hookups to vehicle pump
- Scene lighting
- Logistics (equipment/inventories)
- Aerial Operations including all electrical and master stream operations and safety for personnel operating on the aerial.

OFFICER:

- Command
- Personnel accountability
- Radio communications
- SCBA
- Tools: portable radio; handlight; small hand tool; and monitoring equipment (CO/LEL meter) as needed

TEAM MEMBER Q-1 (Quint Ops team – officer’s side rear-facing seat):

If performing as an engine company:

- Attack line nozzleman (team leader)
- SCBA
- Handlight

If performing as a ladder company:

- Vent/enter/search (team leader)
- Ladder building (if appropriate)
- SCBA
- Thermal imager
- Hand-held hydraulic forcible entry tool
- Handlight/radio

TEAM MEMBER Q-2 (Quint Ops team – driver’s side rear-facing seat):

If performing as an engine company:

- Hit hydrant (if appropriate)
- Attack line back-up man
- SCBA
- Irons/Hand tool
- Radio

- If performing as a ladder company
- Ladder building (if appropriate)
 - Join vent/enter/search effort
 - SCBA
 - Short pike pole
 - Handlight
 - Radio

Should extra personnel be available, they could perform the hydrant duty alone, freeing up the Q-2 position to perform engine company duties immediately.

Conclusion

When determining the standard riding position assignments, departments should document these in standard operating guidelines, and should label the seats on the apparatus to keep the tasks fresh in the minds of firefighters who man the equipment. Departments have utilized engraved labels mounted in front of or adjacent to the riding positions, but these limit the ability to modify the tasks should concepts change. A more flexible method might be to use labelmakers with tape or similar methods mounted on plastic or metal plates. These are much more able to change should procedures need to be modified.

Firefighters operating on quint apparatus must be trained and prepared to fit the role of both engine company and ladder company firefighters at any incident. Before exiting the apparatus at a scene, they should confirm their assignment with the apparatus officer, as priorities may be changed by the officer or incident commander. If the manpower on the apparatus is not adequate to perform a dual role, the quint must function as either an engine or a ladder company – not both. That doesn't necessarily mean that the apparatus is wasted, as the quint adds the tactical advantage on the fireground of an aerial device or a pump to the basic engine company or ladder company tools. Regardless of how your quint is used, take the time now to be sure all firefighters serving on a quint company know what they are supposed to do when they arrive on the fireground.

References:

“Tactics - Hot Seats – Engine Company Standard Riding Position Assignments,”
Firefighter's News, August/September 1996

“Tactics - Hot Seats – Ladder Company Standard Riding Position Assignments,”
Firefighter's News, October/November 1996.

“Tactics – Rescue Riding Positions,” Firefighter's News, December/January,
1996.

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