

2024 BLUE CARD HAZARD-ZONE CONFERENCE SPEAKER PREVIEW



Nothing Beats a Great View: Upgrade Your Size-Ups, 360s & On-Scene Decision-Making with a thermal imager.

BY DISTRICT CHIEF JOHN EADICICCO

B SHIFTER *Buckslip*, May 28, 2024

If you are anything like me, you research the heck out of a new truck before you even think about test-driving it, collecting as much information as possible before making a final choice. Payload, max tow capacity, customer reviews, complaints, recalls, options, aftermarket accessories, fuel mileage, headroom, legroom, sunroof, backup cameras, radio systems—you get my point. Not a truck person? Pick your hobby. Bow hunting? Photography? Travel? Sports? Chances are you do plenty of research before making any major decisions. (I have worked with folks who can rattle off the stats for Pete Rose, but they can't decide what's for dinner. I get it. Dinner is the hardest decision in the firehouse every damn day.)



This image from a NIST experiment shows the difference between what we see with the naked eye (left) vs. a thermal imaging camera. The TIC clearly reveals heat at the front door.

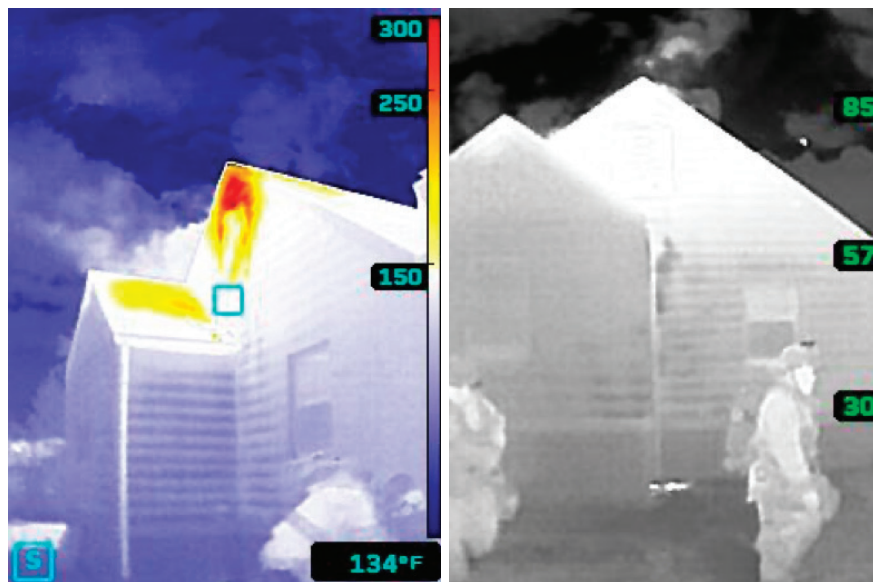
Shouldn't the first-arriving officer at the scene of a structure fire gather as much information as possible before committing to or changing tactics? Unfortunately, they don't have as much time to collect data as when buying a new truck. They must read conditions and create an incident action plan that aligns with the Risk Management Model. Then, they have to deliver an initial radio report, complete a 360, and deliver a follow-up report, which could change the IAP (good thing we have a system to put

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it all together). Well-informed officers make solid decisions, and a thermal imager is an invaluable tool that allows them to quickly identify potential hazards they might otherwise overlook.

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The first thermal imager I remember sat in a box mounted to a fire helmet. It had a 10-pound battery pack and flip-down goggles, like the ones used for night vision. No one wanted to wear that monstrosity on their head. But today's thermal imaging cameras are lightweight, with better resolution and more modes. They are user-friendly and come in various sizes, some as small as cell phones. Despite these advancements, they have a lower price tag than 25 or 30 years ago.



Comparing the survey/search mode to the basic mode will help identify where the problem is so fire officers can develop plans to manage the incident.

Get into the routine of powering up your TIC en route (warm-up times vary by manufacturer), then step off the truck looking at the building with your eyes and the TIC. If your camera has *survey* or *search and rescue* modes, this is a great time to use it. Read the smoke or flames, but do not get sucked into the camera; process the information you see, put the camera down and proceed. A trick I use is to only lift the camera at the corners of the building, which keeps me from developing tunnel vision and missing other potential hazards. It would be terrible for an officer to end up in a pool on the Charlie side because they did not put the TIC down and evaluate all risks.

Variables such as fences, slopes or building arrangements can make setting up at the corners difficult. But whenever possible, get to a corner and stand far enough back to view the entire structure with the camera.

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Get that *gangsta grip* if you must (turn the camera sideways); most TICs have a wider horizontal view, and changing your grip offers a greater field of vision in the vertical plane. In this position, we might be able to see from the basement to the attic. Read the heat levels. In the lower survey or search modes, we will see colorization at lower temperatures of around 150 degrees vs. 300 degrees. Ask yourself: Where is the highest heat level? Where is the heat traveling, and what am I gonna do about it? Do we suspect the structure is occupied? Is there tenable space? The answers to these questions and the information collected from the thermal imager and your naked eye will help you develop an IAP.

Thermal imagers help us gather critical information before we make decisions. You might have this technology sitting on the fire truck, but firefighters must know how and when to use it. When we get the newest, latest and greatest EKG monitor, don't we make a big deal out of training our EMTs and paramedics on its functions and testing them to ensure they know how to use it when treating Mrs. Smith? Sure, we do! We should do the same things for our fireground equipment. The limitations of the camera are dependent on the user's skill. Please join us at the 2024 Blue Card Hazard-Zone Conference Sept. 30–Oct. 4, where I will present two sessions on how thermal imagers can help you make better fireground decisions. **BS**



The SAFE-T dollhouse prop is a great way to train officers to recognize heat, estimate where it is going and develop an IAP to manage the critical fireground factors.



Sep 30–Oct 4 | Cincinnati, Ohio

2024 Blue Card HAZARD-ZONE CONFERENCE

Met District Chief John Eadicicco at the 2024 Blue Card Hazard-Zone Conference in Cincinnati Sept. 30–Oct. 4. D.C. Eadicicco is one many speakers scheduled to share their insight, advice and experience at this year's event. [CLICK HERE](#) for details and registration information.



District Chief John Eadicicco is a 27-year veteran of the fire service. He holds a degree in fire service administration from Columbia Southern University and is a graduate of the Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association's Ohio Fire Executive Program. Chief Eadicicco is a lead instructor for Blue Card's SAFE-T Train-the-Trainer program. He is also a rescue technician with Hamilton County (Ohio) Urban Search and Rescue and an Ohio Region 6 Swift Water Response Team commander. Chief Eadicicco is lead instructor and curriculum developer with the Hamilton County Working Group, delivering Tactical Thermal Imaging, Company Officer Decision-Making, Rescue Operations, and Engine and Truck Company Operations classes. In addition, Chief Eadicicco is an Ohio Certified Firefighter 2, Fire Instructor, Live Fire Instructor, Fire Safety Inspector and an EMT.