27. The Art of Reading Smoke

Instructor: Rob Backer

Today's structure fires are more dangerous than ever before. Lightweight construction, low-mass synthetics, and open space floorplans have created a perfect storm for rapid, prolific fire growth and extreme behavior. It is imperative for firefighters of all ranks and experience levels to be prepared for this new battle. The Art of Reading Smoke provides the knowledge necessary for first-arriving firefighters, officers, and chief officers to determine the fire's location, progression, and future "from the seat" before seeing any flame. This knowledge ensures that the correct tactics are implemented for the best possible outcome. Through the extensive use of actual fireground videos, first-time students will develop, and return students will refine their knowledge and skills to become INTELLECTUALLY aggressive firefighters, rather than ARBITRARILY aggressive. The next generation of Reading Smoke brings new research, a new library of videos, and discussion on cancer prevention, tactics and strategies to develop the next generation of aggressive interior firefighting!

About the Instructor:

Rob Backer is a 23-year student of the fire service and currently serves as Battalion Chief for Thornton Fire Department in Thornton, Colorado, having previously served as a firefighter, Lieutenant, and Captain. He has written for Fire Engineering and multiple fire service blogs. He is an instructor for The Art of Reading Smoke and available to teach nationally. He can be reached at robbacker.fdi@gmail.com