**Fire Behavior Key Terms**

Backdraft – instantaneous explosion or rapid burning caused by an increase in ventilation in an oxygen-depleted confined space

Decay stage – the stage of fire development when energy release diminishes, temperatures decrease, and fuel is consumed; the fire changes from ventilation-controlled to fuel controlled

Deflagration – explosively rapid combustion

Flashover – the rapid transition between the growth stage and the fully developed stage that is characterized by burning gases pushing out of the compartment’s openings at a substantial velocity

Fully developed stage – the stage of fire development when energy release is limited only by the availability of fuel and oxygen, and is at its maximum rate

Growth stage – the early stage of a fire during which fuel and oxygen are almost unlimited and the release of heat increases rapidly

Ignition – the moment when the three elements of the fire triangle (fuel, air, and heat) come together and combustion occurs

Incipient stage – the first stage of fire development, which includes ignition and isolated heat production; the oxygen content of the air is not significantly reduced in this phase

Mushroom – when fire spreads horizontally through the compartment

Non-piloted ignition – occurs when a material reaches its autoignition temperature as the result of self-heating (i.e. spontaneous ignition)

Piloted ignition – caused by a flame or spark

Rollover – the condition when unburned fire gases accumulate at the top of a compartment and ignite, propagating flames through the hot gas layer or across the ceiling

Thermal layering – the tendency of gases to form layers according to temperature (hottest gases at the ceiling and lowest gases at the floor) as a result of combustion in a confined space