

## TV Review: NBC's 'Chicago Fire' Generates Little Heat

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on October 10, 2012 - 11:48am

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CHICAGO – I might be more forgiving of the dramatic failings of the saga of Matthew Casey if I had never met Tommy Gavin. For years, we felt the pain and drama of life as a firefighter on FX's "Rescue Me," and, while I had some issues with that show, it definitely casts NBC's "Chicago Fire" in a different light. However, even without Denis Leary's hit show, I don't think this melodrama would work. It just doesn't connect on a realistic level like we need shows like this to do. I don't expect it to burn for long.



Television Rating: **1.5/5.0**

It doesn't help that the majority of "Chicago Fire" has been cast with beautiful people who look more likely to be on a red carpet than a red truck. There's a lack of grit, dirt, and honesty in nearly every scene of "Chicago Fire" and every issue with the show comes back to that missing essential ingredient — realism. You can't feel the flame here. You're too busy looking at the perfect make-up.



Chicago Fire  
Photo credit: NBC

It's not really the fault of the ensemble, a group of men and women who are talented even if half of them are miscast on this particular program. I liked Jesse Spencer on "House" but I can't stand him here as Lt. Matthew Casey, one of the two alpha males of Firehouse 51. Casey butts heads with Lt. Kelly Severide (Taylor Kinney) and both blame the other for the death of a recent firefighter. It doesn't help Casey's mental state or physical readiness that he's splitting from the lovely Hallie (Teri Reeves).



Chicago Fire  
Photo credit: NBC

Naturally, the firehouse includes a variety of personalities including the troubled Battalion Chief Wallace Boden (Eamonn Walker), paramedics Gabriela Dawson (Monica Raymund) & Leslie Shay (Lauren German), and firefighters Christopher Herrmann (David Eigenberg) & Peter Mills (Charlie Barnett), each with their own drama.

Everyone has drama on "Chicago Fire" but none of it registers below pure cliché. Other than a few very smart decisions by veteran Walker, so great on "Oz" and deserving of a much richer drama than this one, nothing feels real here. More than any other new Fall drama, even casual TV fans will see through the clichéd writing and lack of realism of "Chicago Fire." None of the cast is to blame. The women are particularly charismatic, especially Reeves & German, but none of them have been given characters that resonate beyond those on a daytime soap.

As NBC continues to struggle to find a hit, they understandably turn to veteran Dick Wolf to bring them back from the brink of total disaster. It's too bad Wolf doesn't dig beneath the uniforms and visual cues of his setting to touch something truly deep. "Chicago Fire" is a show that makes "Rescue Me" look better by comparison. Well, it would if it stays on long enough to really matter, which seems unlikely.

*"Chicago Fire" stars Jesse Spencer, Taylor Kinney, Teri Reeves, Eamonn Walker, Monica Raymund, Lauren German, Charlie Barnett, and David Eigenberg. It premieres on NBC on Wednesday, October 10, 2012 at 9pm CST.*



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