



In-Station Training

TM 20-44 Basement Fire-Firefighter Rescue



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Training Code: TBD

Validated by:

Training Hours: 0.2

Purpose

I was at my daughter's house a few miles away from this fire when Worcester (MA) Firefighter Chris Roy lost his life. The next day, my granddaughter Lily told me that his daughter was her friend and asked me how her friend's dad could die in the line of duty. This is the third in a series of three 10-Minute Trainings examining this incident. If you have not completed 10-Minute Training 20-42 and 20-43, do so before completing this training. As you complete this 10-Minute Training think about Lily's question.

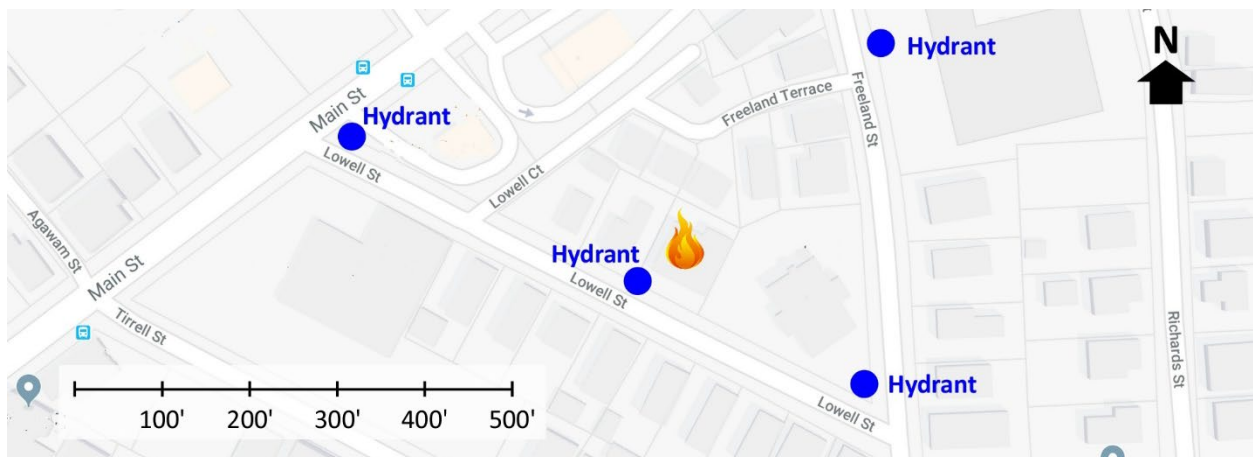
Learning Outcomes

Firefighters and fire officers respond effectively to a Mayday for firefighters trapped on floors above the fire.

Conducting the Drill

This incident involved a fire in the basement of the apartment building at 5-7 Lowell Street in Worcester, Massachusetts on December 9, 2018 at 03:15 (Sullivan & Wiley, 2018, Hanson, 2018). Review the map and photos (Figures 1-6) to gain an understanding of area and building involved.

Figure 1. Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2019). [Google map 5-7 Lowell Street in Worcester, MA].

<http://bit.ly/2EbLhOi>.

The closest hydrant is located on Lowell Street at the Alpha/Bravo corner of the fire building. Additional hydrants are at the ends of Lowell Street and on Freeland Street as illustrated in Figure 1.

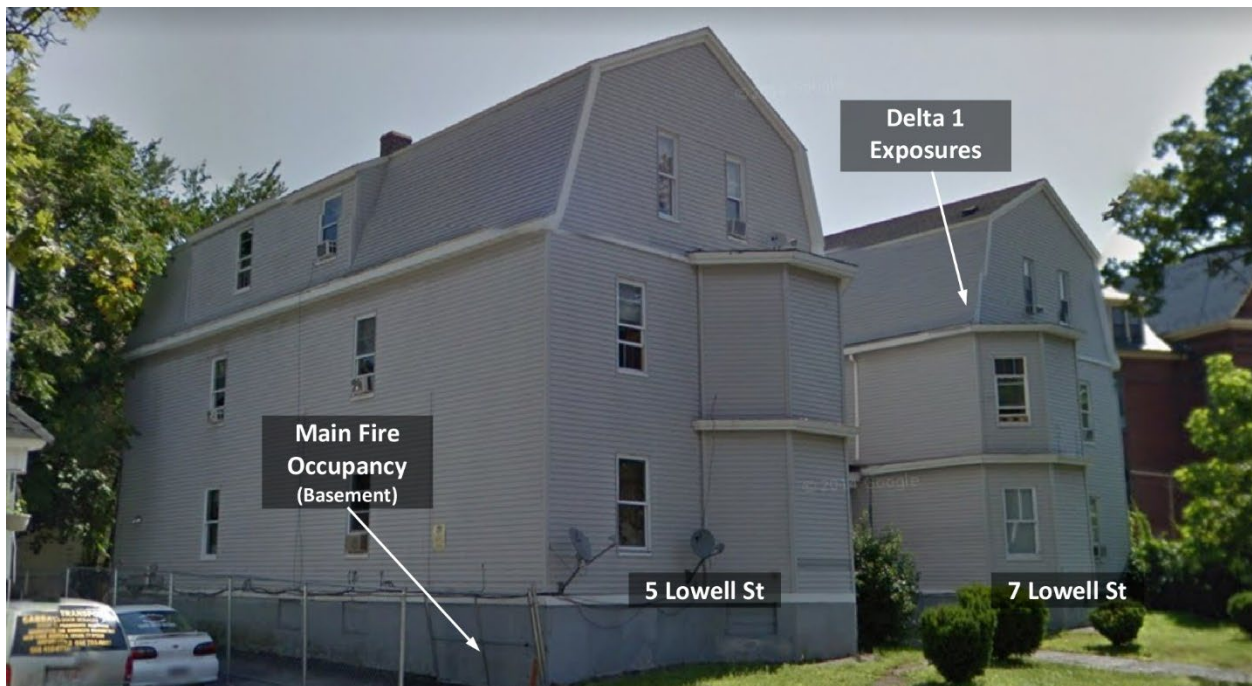
The fire building is a three-story, wood (balloon) frame “H” shaped structure built in 1900. The building contains six dwelling units (three in each side of the “H” and two per floor) and a full basement.

Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2019). [Google aerial view, 5-7 Lowell Street in Worcester, MA]. <http://bit.ly/2Pxph2c>.

Figure 3. Alpha/Bravo Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2018). [Google street view, 5-7 Lowell Street in Worcester, MA]. <http://bit.ly/2B8yAAL>.

Figure 4. Side Alpha



Note: Adapted from Google. (2018). [Google street view 5-7 Lowell Street in Worcester, MA]. <http://bit.ly/2pywiZF>.

Figure 5. Alpha/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2018). [Google street view, 5-7 Lowell Street in Worcester, MA]. <http://bit.ly/2G7lesP>.

Figure 6. Side Charlie



Note: Adapted from Google. (2019). [Google 3d aerial view, 5-7 Lowell Street in Worcester, MA]. <http://bit.ly/2B9Ybcx>.

As discussed in 10-Minute Trainings 20-42 and 20-43 companies operating at this incident quickly controlled a fire in the basement of 5 Lowell Street, but discovered that the fire had extended into the interconnected basement of Exposure Delta 1, 7 Lowell Street and began to extend through structural voids and the interior of the building to Floors 1-3 (Murray, 2019).

During firefighting operations in Exposure Delta 1, Ladder 4 and Ladder 5 were operating on Floor 2 when conditions began to deteriorate with significant involvement of Floor 1 of the Delta 1 Exposure (7 Lowell Street). The following radio transmission is the first report of a problem on Floor 2: “Ladder 5, Division 2; Access on the front door is blocked, do not have an exit, cannot find our way out, need a line to keep the front stairwell clear” (Broadcastify, 2018).

One member of Ladder 5 is observed in a window on Side Alpha and companies operating on Side Alpha deploy a portable ladder and assist this individual in exiting the second-floor window. Less than two minutes later, while efforts are underway to rescue the trapped member of Ladder 5 on Side Alpha, Ladder 4 reports “we have companies stuck second floor ‘B’ Side, we have no exit”. Command tells them to come out the A Side windows. (Broadcastify, 2018).

Watch the [incident video](#) (Udizy1969, 2018) from 23:00 to 24:35, listen to the [incident audio](#) (Broadcastify, 2018) from 00:00 to 01:50 and examine Figure 7.

Figure 7. Firefighter Rescue on Side Alpha



Note: Adapted from Udizy1969. (2018). *Fatal fire Lowell Street Worcester Ma, with Udizy1969*.
<http://bit.ly/2Np6HdH>

1. The member of Ladder 5 was assisted in escaping through the second-floor window on Side Alpha and over a ladder to the ground. What factors should be considered in placement of a portable ladder for firefighter rescue? Think specifically about tip position and climbing angle.
2. How would rescue operations on Side Alpha been impacted if the member of Ladder 5 was unable to assist in his own rescue by climbing out the window? If your company was tasked with rescuing a firefighter from this window, how would you approach the task? Would your actions be like those taken in this incident to rescue the member of Ladder 5? Why or why not?

After rescue of the member of Ladder 5 on Side Alpha, there were still firefighters trapped on Floor 2. 02:40 after their initial radio report that they were stuck on floor 2, Ladder 4 transmitted “Mayday, Mayday firefighter can’t get out, we are in [unintelligible]” (Broadcastify, 2018). Less than 00:30 later, a company operating on Side Charlie reports “we need a ladder to the rear of the building we have them in the C Side out the window” (Broadcastify, 2018).

Listen to the [incident audio](#) (Broadcastify, 2018) from 01:19 to 04:35 and examine Figure 8 illustrating conditions on Side Delta which provides a limited (but significant) perspective on overall conditions in Exposure Delta 1 during initial firefighter rescue operations.

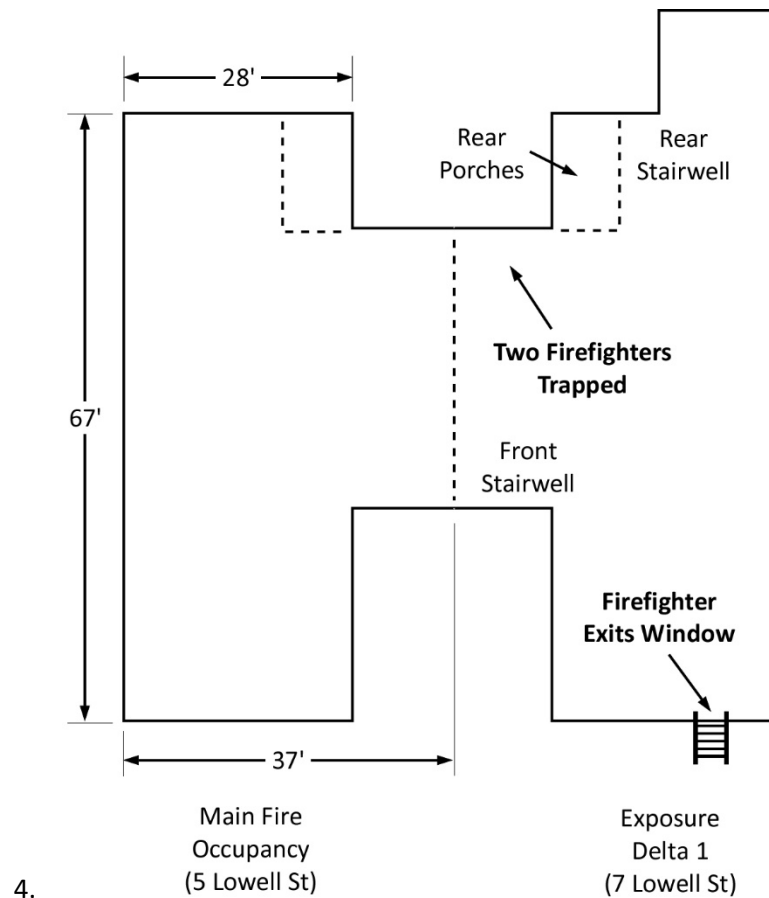
Figure 8. Conditions on Side Delta When Trapped Firefighters Observed on Side Charlie



Note: Adapted from Udizzy1969. (2018). *Fatal fire Lowell Street Worcester Ma, with Udizzy1969*. <http://bit.ly/2Np6HdH>

3. If following the Mayday, you observed one of the trapped firefighters on Floor 2, Side Charlie (in the location shown in Figure 9), what information would you communicate to Command? Write down your Priority Traffic message in conditions, actions, needs format exactly as you would transmit it!

Figure 9. Building Configuration and Location of Mayday Firefighters



The incident video shows rescue operations on Side Charlie with a view from the Bravo/Charlie Corner beginning at least 10 minutes after the trapped firefighters were reported at a window on Floor 2, Side Charlie. Watch the [incident video](#) (Udizzy1969, 2018) from 39:50 to 42:00 showing rescue of the first firefighter on Side Charlie (approximately 18 to 20 minutes after the Mayday from Ladder 4). Firefighter Chris Roy, Ladder 4 is still trapped on Floor 2.

5. If your company were tasked with rescue of two trapped firefighters from Floor 2 Side Charlie under conditions like those encountered in this incident, how would you go about this task? Would you do anything different than the companies operating at this incident? Why or why not?

6. Approximately 11 minutes after Ladder 4 transmitted their Mayday, Ladder 7 reports “heavy fire on the second floor”. If your company was tasked with fire control on Floor 2 in the area where the Mayday firefighters were located, how would you go about this task? Keep in mind that companies have previously reported compromise of the stairwell(s).

7. Ladder 4 was on the first alarm for this incident and has been on-scene and working for over 30 minutes. What is the probability that Firefighter Roy has exhausted the air supply in his self-contained breathing apparatus? If you were tasked with rescue of a firefighter in these circumstances, what options exist to maintain the Mayday firefighter’s air supply during rescue operations?

Watch the [incident video](#) (Udizy1969, 2018) from 42:15 to 45:00 and examine Figure 10. Crews operating on the exterior were making a window cut (cutting the wall from the windowsill to floor level on each side of the window) to facilitate extrication of Firefighter Roy from the building. While this building appears to be wood frame, companies performing the window cut discovered that it was ordinary construction (brick and wood joist) with the roof and gable ends being wood frame (Real Living, 2020). This complicated the rescue of Firefighter Roy.

8. What differences are there when using a window cut in a building of balloon frame construction (as compared to platform frame construction)? What other potential challenges may be encountered when using this tactic (in any type of construction)?

9. What options exist for rescue if a window cut is not possible due to brick wall construction?

Figure 10. Rescue Operations on Side Charlie



Note: Adapted from Scott LaPrade (2018). [photo]. <https://www.smokeshowingphotography.com/>.

Additional Learning: 10-Minute Trainings 20-42 through 20-44 looked at specific elements of the incident in which Firefighter Chris Roy lost his life. However, it is also useful to watch the entire incident video and radio traffic related to the Mayday.

Use of the rescue air supply (RIT pack) is an infrequently used skill that is critical when a firefighter or officer in the hazard zone has a low air emergency or requires extended extrication. Review use of the rescue air supply (RIT pack) and practice supporting a downed firefighter's air supply under zero visibility conditions. Don't just practice this skill until you get it right, practice it until you can't get it wrong!

The window cut is a simple tactic to simplify the task of removing a large victim or firefighter wearing structural firefighting clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus from a wood frame building. However, there are several important considerations depending on the type of wood frame construction (e.g., balloon frame versus platform frame). The following videos illustrate application of this tactic but may contain some techniques and methods that are not best practice (watch with a critical eye). Watch [RIT: Window to Door Conversion](#) (Brasells, 2011) for a good explanation of this tactic as applied on the ground floor. This tactic becomes a little more complex when performed on an upper floor. Watch [Upper Floor Firefighter VES & Window to Door Conversion](#) (Search Culture, 2016) for a good example of how the window cut may be combined with vent, enter, search (VES).

References

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Appendix A-Radio Traffic Transcript

This radio traffic recording is from Broadcastify, a service that provides live feeds from public safety communications over the internet. Typically, the feed includes all radio channels or frequencies used by the agency (resulting in some degradation of the quality of the recording on a single frequency or channel). Some of the unintelligible communication may have been a result of this recording process, but much of it was due to the use of handheld radios and firefighters and officer working in breathing apparatus.

The following is a partial transcript of radio traffic in this recording. It is important to note that many of the radio transmissions were listened to multiple times in order to determine what was being said (a luxury not available to the personnel operating at this incident).

Ladder 5, Division 2; Access on the front door is blocked, do not have an exit, cannot find our way out, need a line to keep the front stairwell clear. [22:32 in Video/00:00 in the audio]

[Division 2] OK we have some companies coming up after you. See if you can get to a window, start taking out a window.

Division 2 to the person on the second floor, can you get to a window on the A Side on the second floor?

Car 2 to Command; we're going to need a line on the Delta Side it starting to run right up the side of the building.

[Command] Ya, received.

Ladder 4 to Command.

[Command] Go ahead.

Ladder 4 to Command.

[Command] Unintelligible Ladder 4.

[Ladder 4] We have companies stuck second floor "B" Side, we have no exit. [23:48 in the video/01:19 in the audio]

[Command] Unintelligible A Side windows.

Rescue to Command we're going in the rear entrance going to the second floor.

[Command] Standby, standby!

Command to 400, standby to do a PAR [personnel accountability report].

[400] Received

[Command] Companies on the second floor there's a ground ladder at the front of the building.

Command from Fire Alarm; Unintelligible PAR.

Command unintelligible.

Command from 400.

[Command] 400, we're going to do a PAR for everybody on the fireground, go through all the companies.

403 (Ladder 4, Firefighter Chris Roy) is on the second floor [02:55 in the audio (01:36 from "companies trapped")]

Command unintelligible.

Ladder 5 to firefighter unintelligible

[Command] All companies maintain radio, OK let's maintain communications.

Command to Ladder 5.

Ladder 5 unintelligible.

[Command] Ladder 5 do you have PAR.

Ladder 5 unintelligible.

Unintelligible.

Unintelligible.

Ladder 4 to 403 (Ladder 4 Firefighter Chris Roy)

Ladder 5 to inside of the building we have ladders at two windows on the A Side of the building.

Mayday, Mayday firefighter can't get out, we are in unintelligible [03:59 in the audio (02:40 from companies stuck")]

Unintelligible.

Washington Command unintelligible we need a ladder to the rear of the building we have them in the C Side out the window [04:25 in the audio (03:06 from "companies stuck")]

Unintelligible back here.

[Unknown] Ladder 7 is coming with a ladder

[Unknown] Check the floor, sound the roof with the ... were on the second, B Side.

[Unknown] Ladder 5 activate your PASS [personal alert safety system] alarm

Ladder 4, Command; we need to find some guys.

[Unknown] Alright you guys be careful coming down that Ladder 7 too it's all ice this I [unintelligible] and I'm outside.

[Unknown] [unintelligible] second floor window, we're hanging out the window right now

Ladder 4 to 403 Chris Roy where are ya?

Ladder 3 you have water on that truck

Ladder 5 to Firefighter Easey what is your location?

[Unknown] [Unintelligible] the top window now

[Unknown] [Unintelligible] ok thank you

Command to Ladder 5

Command to Ladder 5

Ladder 4 to 403 [Ladder 4 Firefighter Chris Roy]

[Unknown] [Unintelligible] east side lower come to [unintelligible] keep [unintelligible] floor. Anyone on the second floor, if you're not at the rear window come to Pete he's sounding the floor.

Car 2 to Fire Alarm, Car 2's going to assume command [third command transfer], Car 4 is going to be Operations

Fire Alarm has that 04:52 [1:37 since dispatched to the incident]

[Unknown] Safety

[Unknown] EMS to the Command Post, EMS to the Command Post

Ladder 5 to anyone on the second floor are you at a window?

Car 2 to Ladder 3 [unintelligible] go back and get a 2-1/2.

Ladder 5 to Firefighter Easey are you out of the building?

Safety, Ladder 5 that's affirmative Firefighter Easey out.

[Unintelligible] looking for Ladder 4 Chris Roy, anybody have eyes on him

Alright Command to 400, go company by company and get a PAR, right now

[Unknown] [Unintelligible]

[Unknown] I'm good, I'm good [unintelligible]

[Unknown] Second floor companies, does anyone have visual on Chris Roy Ladder 4

[Unknown] [Unintelligible] hydrant in there.

[Unknown] Chief we haven't got water yet

[Unknown] [Unintelligible] stop talking

Ladder 5 to Firefighter Roy Ladder 4

Command to Firefighter Roy, sound the floor [unintelligible]

[Unknown] [unintelligible] Delta Side [unintelligible]

[Unknown] Repeat situation on the third floor [unintelligible]

Car 5 to Command

Command

[Car 5] We are in the C Side of the building, we have a firefighter trapped, we're trying to get him out now, we have contact.

[Command} OK, received [unintelligible] location

[Car 5] The rear of the building, can you get someone [unintelligible] here quick

[Command] Repeat that

[Car 5] Get some crews with thermal imagers to the rear of the building

Command to crews with thermal imagers to the rear of the building

[Unknown] [Unintelligible we were able to get that second hydrant

Command to Lieutenant Johnson

Car 2 to Car 5, I'm coming with two guys and a camera in a minute

Car 5 to Command

Command answering Car 5

[Car 5] Can we get a highrise pack to the rear.

[Command] Highrise pack to the rear

[Unintelligible] from On-Duty Car 14 will you let Car 5 know

[Unknown] [Unintelligible]

[Unknown] [Unintelligible] to Command

Command from Car 5

[Car 5] Hey command [unintelligible] window [unintelligible]

[Command] Received, we have a highrise coming through here, highrise pack to the rear

[Unknown] [Unintelligible] highrise

Command to Ladder 5

Ladder 5

[Command] I need you and your crew to Charlie Side, rear

[Ladder 5] Received, I'm coming off seven, I'm gong to grab my crew [unintelligible]

Command to Car 5

[Command] What do you need in the rear

[Unknown] [Unintelligible]

[Unknown] Highrise pack is coming through here

[Unknown] [Unintelligible]

Safety, Command

[Unknown] Portable generator to the back with a light

[Unknown] Received portable generator to the back with [unintelligible]

[Unknown] [Unintelligible], Command

Command answering

[Unknown] We don't have any water to it [unintelligible]

Ladder 503 to Ladder 5

[Unknown] [Unintelligible] thank you [unintelligible]

[Unknown] [Unintelligible] Engine 4

[Unknown] Received

Command to Car 5, what do you need

Fire Alarm to Command

Command answering

[Fire Alarm] We are 55 minutes in 55 minutes

Car 3 to Rescue 1 chauffer

Car 3 to Rescue 1 driver

Car 5 to Command if you have a company, send them back

Car 2 to Command if we can get one more ground ladder back here

Command to Engine 5 charge the green 2-1/2 that's going to the rear of the building, charge the green 2-1/2 that's going to the rear of the building

Ladder 3 to 301 send your water

Command to Car 5

[Car 5] Answering

[Command] What do you need in the rear?

[Car 5] Need a fresh crew

[Command] OK Engine 13's coming to the rear

[Unknown] [Unintelligible]

Ladder 7 to Command we have heavy fire on the second floor

[Fire Alarm] 512 is going to be Ops A, time out 05:01 [1:46 since dispatched to the incident]

04:52 [1:37 since dispatched to the incident]

Car 4 to Fire Alarm

Car 14 to Fire Alarm, what companies are going on that box? Fire alarm what chief cars?

[Fire Alarm] Hang on chief toning it out right now

Ladder 4 to Car 5 [unintelligible]

[Unknown] [Unintelligible]

Operations [Car 4] to Command

Operations in the rear of the building, we need that 2-1/2 charged right now, the green one that's going to the back.

[Command] Received

[Unknown] [Unintelligible]

Fire Alarm Car 1 on-scene

Fire alarm has that.

Command in the rear, Operations in the rear to Command, we are still in [unintelligible] we're working on cutting a hole to get him out the window.

Command to Engine 5, [unintelligible] charge the 2-1/2, the green 2-1/2 going to the rear.

[Engine 5] Water on the way

Ladder 7 to Engine 5, can you increase pressure to Ladder 7's truck at all?

[Engine 5] That's affirmative

[Fire Alarm] [Unintelligible] Street they say the front porch is on fire, it is full of people on the first floor, they are located at the front door, they are saying that it is hot.

Command to Fire Alarm, strike a fourth alarm [approximately 37:11 in the incident video]

[Fire Alarm] Do you realize I have no RIT on this, no Rescue?

Car 14 has that

Fire Alarm, Command

Command answering

Be advised, we just put out another structure fire, 169 Hamilton Street, all other companies are tied up

Received

Auburn Tower 1, Worcester Fire on Admin

[Unknown] Fire showing on the front porch, Engine 33 [unintelligible]

Fire Alarm received, fire showing on the front porch

Car 3 [Unintelligible]

[Unknown] [Unintelligible]

[Unknown] [Unintelligible] Fire Alarm

Car 5 to Fire Alarm

Fire Alarm

[Car 5] What's the [unintelligible] on the other structure?

[Fire Alarm] Residents report that the front porch was on fire

Received

Car 14 on Ops Alpha

[Unknown] Chief when you get to the call if you can release companies release a few companies and get them here now.

[Unknown] Chief can you repeat, you are releasing companies?

We are looking for a 4th alarm response on Lowell Street, if you can release companies when you get on scene, please do so

[Car 14] OK

Car 10 at Fire Alarm calling Car 5

[Unknown] [Unintelligible]

[Unknown] I'm right here

[Unknown] Received

Car 14

[Fire Alarm] Received, Engine 7 arrived with fire showing

[Car 14] Yea, I got that, Engine 7 what's your situation?

[Engine 7] Water on the fire, knocking it down now, going to try and work our way around to the B Side
[unintelligible]

Fire Alarm, Auburn's Tower are our operating on Ops B, Bravo?

[Fire Alarm] Hang on one second

[Unknown] Bravo

[Auburn Tower] Bravo, thanks

Engine 9, Engine 7 do you need a hydrant?

[Engine 7] Affirmative we are going to need a hydrant

[Fire Alarm] Standby

CONTINUE FROM 22:00

Car 1, Fire Alarm

Fire Alarm Answering

[Car 1] Where's the other fire?

[Fire Alarm] The other fire is over at 161 Hamilton Street, the gas meter was on fire on the front porch

Received, Car 1 is Lowell Command

[Car 1] What did you say? Hamilton?

Engine 16 to Fire Alarm

Fire Alarm Answering

[Fire Alarm] Received, Car 14 Arriving

Car 1 to Fire Alarm

[Unknown] Who's going in?, Who's on the first floor?

[Unknown] Can you hear me Ops C on the other fire please?

[Unknown] Command we need EMS to the rear of the building, EMS to the rear of the building.

[Unknown] They're on their way.

Fire Alarm, Car 1, per Engine 7 the fire is mostly out, they are still on scene with the other companies.

Command to Car 5 there should be EMS back there.

Car 10 calling Car 1.

Car 1.

[Car 10] Do you have the SIU there or do you need there?

[Car 1] I don't believe they are here, but we need them here.

[Car 10] Received.

Lowell Command to the rear of the building.

[Unknown] Why don't you get line in the second floor, get a line in that second-floor window.

[Unknown] [Unintelligible].

Ladder 1 going to the top floor.

Ladder 7 exterior all [unintelligible].

[Unknown] Received.

Command to Car 2.

[Unknown] [Unintelligible] basement.

Lowell Command to Car 2.

[Fire Alarm] [Unintelligible]

[Unknown] Chief you have a meter on you? [Unintelligible] gas readings in the basement]

[Unknown] Received.

[Unknown] Front of the building.

[Unknown] Negative, its in back.

Safety, Rescue 1.

Safety to Rescue 1.

Car 3, Car 3 [unintelligible] 2-1/2s to the back of the building.

[Unknown] I need the uncharged 2-1/2 charged immediately.

Command to Operations.

Operations answering [45:49 in the video]

[Command] Can I get an update please?

We have the firefighter at the window, still trying to extricate.

Ladder 6 to Command there's no [unintelligible]

Command to Operations, is that stable now?

Operations, repeat that now.

[Command] I want to know if that Mayday situation is stabilized, I know you haven't got him out yet. Is it stabilized?

[Operations] That's affirmative. We got the guy at the window he just can't get out, we're making a hole right now.

[Command] OK received.

Command to Car 400.

Car 400.

I need you to conduct a PAR, right now, conduct a PAR [unintelligible]

[Car 400] Received.

[Car 400] Engine 2 PAR

Engine 2 has PAR.

[Car 400] Engine 4

[Fire Alarm] Chief what are the status with your companies there? [Unintelligible] release any of them?
[Unintelligible] still tied up?

[Unknown] [Unintelligible] Who's calling Fire Alarm?

Fire Alarm calling.

[Unknown] Yea, I'll let you know.

[Fire Alarm] Alright received chief.

Fire Alarm calling Car 14.

[Car 14] Go ahead Fire Alarm.

[Fire Alarm] 10-minutes in.

[Car 14] OK you can stop the clock.

[Fire Alarm] Received.

Fire Alarm, Car 5 on Admin.

Fire Alarm.

[Car 400] Engine 12

Engine 12 has PAR

[Car 400] Engine 15

Engine 15 has PAR

[Car 400] Engine 5.

Engine 5 has PAR.

[Car 400] Engine 3

Engine 3, 301 Richie you coming back to the truck?

Car 10 to Command.

Audio clip ends prior to extrication of Firefighter Roy.