



Author

Chief Ed Hartin

Purpose

In structural firefighting stretching attack lines to the interior to support fire control and primary search is a critical element of an offensive strategy. However, exterior application of water can also be an effective offensive tactic. The keys in using these two tactics is developing an adequate flow rate, effective distribution, and achieving quick water on the fire.

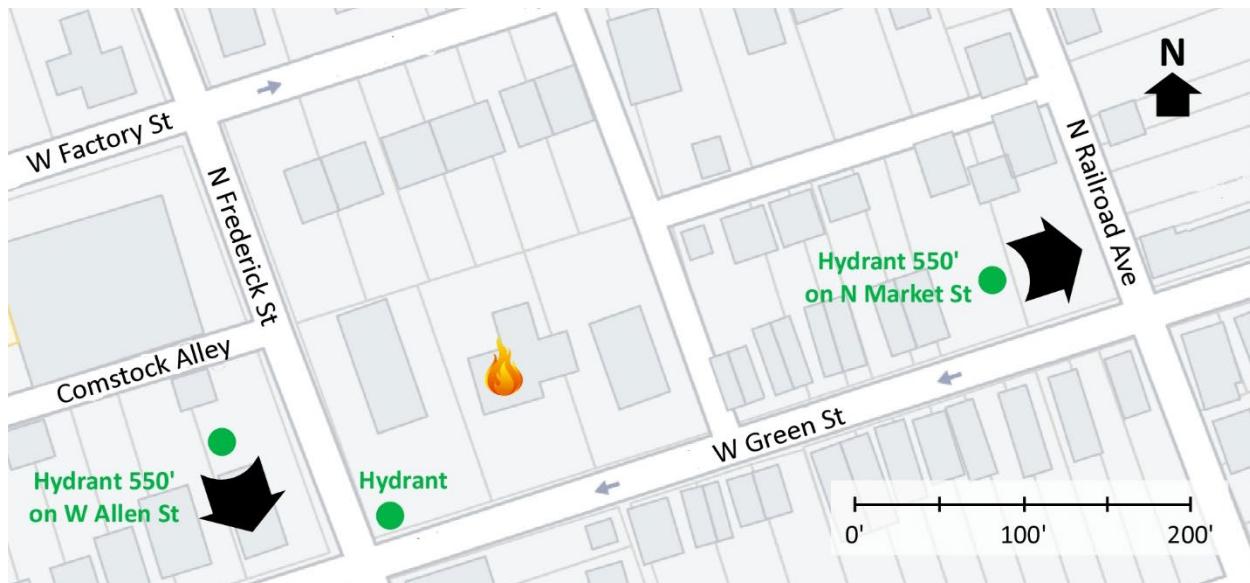
Learning Outcomes

Command officers perform effective ongoing size-up; select an appropriate strategy, and implement tactics based on the strategic decision-making model.

Conducting the Drill

This incident involved a residential fire at 200 N Frederick Street (access off Green Street) in Mechanicsburg Borough, Pennsylvania on January 16, 2023, at 22:28 (Paul, 2022, Carson, 2022, & DJM News Media, 2022). Review the map and photos (Figures 1-7) to gain an understanding of area and building involved.

Figure 1. Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022a). [map 200 N Frederick Street, Mechanicsburg Borough, PA]. <https://bit.ly/3kk4CE1>.

The addressing for the incident location seems to be a bit strange, but examining Figures 4 and 5, the “front” of the house faces North Frederick Street. It is likely that the lot was subdivided, and the Bravo 1 Exposure was constructed later, resulting in the unusual addressing.

The closest hydrant is at the intersection of North Frederick Street and West Green Street. An additional hydrant is located on West Allen Street to the south of the incident location as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022b). [aerial view 200 N Frederick Street, Mechanicsburg Borough, PA]. <https://bit.ly/3CXkT8o>.

The configuration of this multi-unit building is a bit unusual in that it is oriented with the “front” towards North Frederick Street (where the building is addressed), but the main access to the building is from West Green Street. As such, this 10-Minute Training identifies West Green Street as the Alpha Side.

Figure 3. Alpha/Delta Corner (from West Green Street)



Note: Adapted from Google. (2021a). [street view 200 N Frederick Street, Mechanicsburg Borough, PA].
<https://bit.ly/3Wl3bT1>.

Figure 4. Side Alpha (from West Green Street)



Note: Adapted from Google. (2021b). [street view 200 N Frederick Street, Mechanicsburg Borough, PA].
<https://bit.ly/3Hf57Iu>.

Figure 5. Alpha/Bravo Corner (from West Green Street)



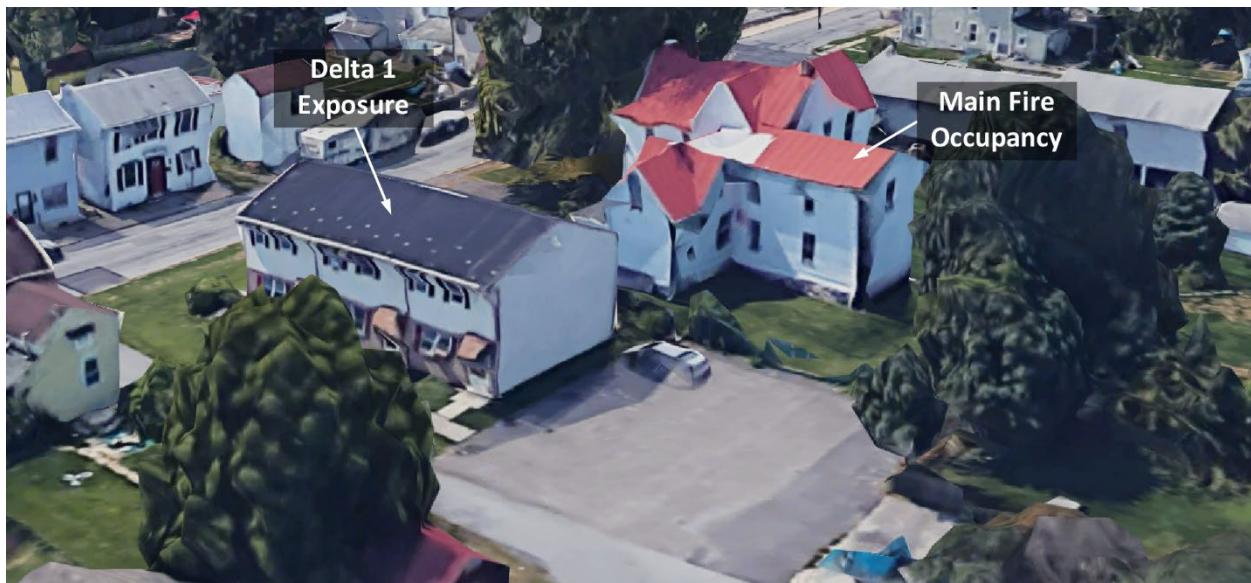
Note: Adapted from Google. (2021c). [street view 200 N Frederick Street, Mechanicsburg Borough, PA]. <https://bit.ly/3XD2xkT>.

Figure 6. Bravo/Charlie Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022c). [3d aerial view 200 N Frederick Street, Mechanicsburg Borough, PA]. <https://bit.ly/3wak7kv>.

Figure 7. Charlie/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022d). [3d aerial view 200 N Frederick Street, Mechanicsburg Borough, PA]. <https://bit.ly/3koubno>.

You were dispatched to 200 N Frederick Street for a residential fire at 22:28. You are responding to this incident as the first arriving command officer. Temperature is 38° F with no appreciable wind from the north (Weather Underground, 2023). While responding you hear two engines, an advanced life support (ALS) ambulance, and a second command officer go enroute. Both engines have staffing typical of your agency. The first arriving engine will arrive from the south southeast on North Frederick Street. The second engine will arrive from the east northeast approximately six minutes after the first. Make a note of your staffing assumptions prior to continuing with this 10-Minute Training. **You will arrive from the south southeast on North Frederick Street shortly after the second engine.** Additional resources have been dispatched and will arrive later in the incident.

1. What critical factors would you consider when dispatched and during response?

As you were responding Engine 1 provided the following initial radio report:

On-scene of a small two story, house with a working fire on Floor 2 and the attic, stretching an attack line on Side Bravo for fire control and primary search, on a hydrant, in the offensive strategy, give me a second alarm with Level Two Staging at the Agway, West Allen and North Fredrick Streets, initiating Frederick Command.

A short time later, Frederick Command provides the following update.

360 complete, two stories all sides, walkup basement on Side Alpha, continuing offensive, and continue the second alarm.

Engine 2 arrives and advised Frederick Command they are Level 1. Frederick Command provides the following orders to Engine 2.

Forward lay from the hydrant at North Market and West Green Streets, stretch an attack line off your apparatus to Side Charlie for fire control.

Watch the [incident video](#) (Paul, 2023) from 01:15 to 02:00 and examine Figure 8 illustrating conditions on your arrival.

Figure 8. Conditions on Arrival of Chief 1



Note: Adapted from Paul, K. (2022). House Fire 2nd Alarm Borough of Mechanicsburg, PA 1/17/23 [video]. <https://bit.ly/3WI5YeX>.

2. What actions will you take prior to contacting IC #1 (Engine 1) to begin command transfer?

3. State your command transfer communication after IC #1 acknowledges your radio contact (exactly as you would transmit it).

Following your confirmation of the location and assignment of Engine 1 and request for a conditions, actions, and needs (CAN) report, IC #1 provides the following CAN:

One line in operation on Side Alpha, applying water with limited effect a second line being stretched to Side Charlie. Need an additional company with an attack line through Side Alpha to Floor 2 for fire control and primary search.

4. State the communication you would have with IC #1 and dispatch to complete the command transfer (exactly as you would transmit it).

5. What action would you take based on the CAN from Engine 1. State the communications you would have with Engine 1 and Engine 2 exactly as you would transmit them.

6. Chief 2 arrives and reports that they are Level 1. State the tactical assignment you will give them exactly as you would transmit it.

Watch the [incident video](#) (Paul, 2023) from 02:00 to 04:00 and the [incident video](#) (Paul, 2023) from 07:00 to 07:15 before answering the next several questions.

7. Why might the initial attack line stretched through Side Alpha have been ineffective at achieving fire control? Was this a flow rate or distribution problem?

8. Was the exterior application of water that began at approximately 07:00 effective at knocking down the fire on Floor 2? Was this due to a change in flow rate or distribution (or a combination of both)?

9. Could effective exterior application been used to knock down the fire on Floor 2 prior to or simultaneously with stretching the attack line through Side Alpha into Floor 1? Why or why not? How could these two tactics be coordinated?

Additional Learning: The concept of integrating exterior water application into an offensive strategy is not a new concept. Have a look at [*FDNY Chief's Corner: Exterior Fire Control*](#) (FDNY, 2020) for a look at how this tactic is used in an urban environment.

Engage your companies in a conversation about how a company with limited staffing can use sequential deployment of multiple lines (e.g., initial line to Side Charlie for exterior application and a second line to Side Alpha for rapid transition to the interior). Consider how the apparatus operator can contribute to efficiency when employing these tactics. Get your crews out and stretch some hose to practice this evolution.

References

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