



In-Station Training

TM 23-42a Residential Fire-Hoarding Conditions



Author

Chief Ed Hartin

Purpose

Many fire departments experience serious fires, injuries, and deaths as the result of compulsive hoarding behavior. The excessive accumulation of materials in homes poses a significant threat to firefighters fighting fires and responding to other emergencies in these homes and to residents and neighbors (NFPA, n.d.). Hoarding conditions can significantly impact resource requirements and tactical operations as structure fires.

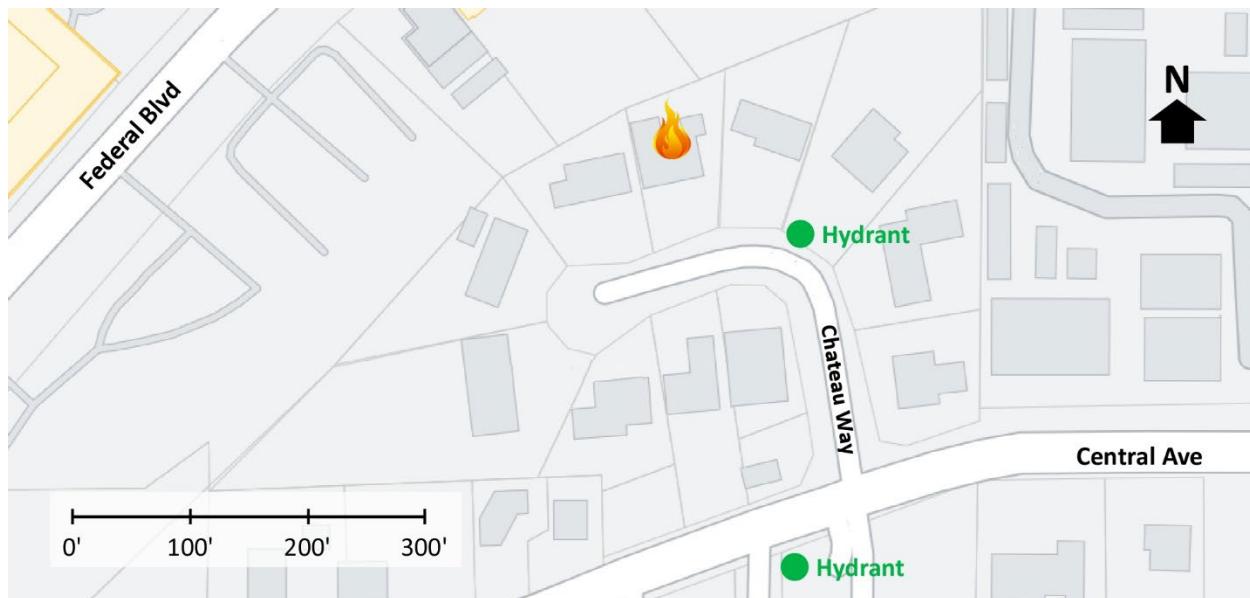
Learning Outcomes

Command officers perform effective ongoing size-up; select an appropriate strategy, and implement tactics based on the strategic decision-making model when operating at incidents involving hoarding conditions.

Conducting the Drill

This incident involved a residential fire 3123 Chateau Way, Lemon Grove, California on September 27, 2023, at 05:10 (911 Video News, 2023 & Heartland Fire & Rescue, 2023). Review the map and photos (Figures 1-6) to gain an understanding of the area and building involved.

Figure 1. Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2023a). [Map, 3123 Chateau Way, Lemon Grove, CA]. <https://bit.ly/3rKziCj>.

There is a hydrant just before the incident location on Chateau Way and a second hydrant on Central Avenue just to the west of Chateau Way as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2023b). [Aerial view 3123 Chateau Way, Lemon Grove, CA].
<https://bit.ly/46AGAax>.

Figure 3. Alpha/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022a). [Street view 3123 Chateau Way, Lemon Grove, CA].
<https://bit.ly/45hk99y>.

Figure 4. Side Alpha



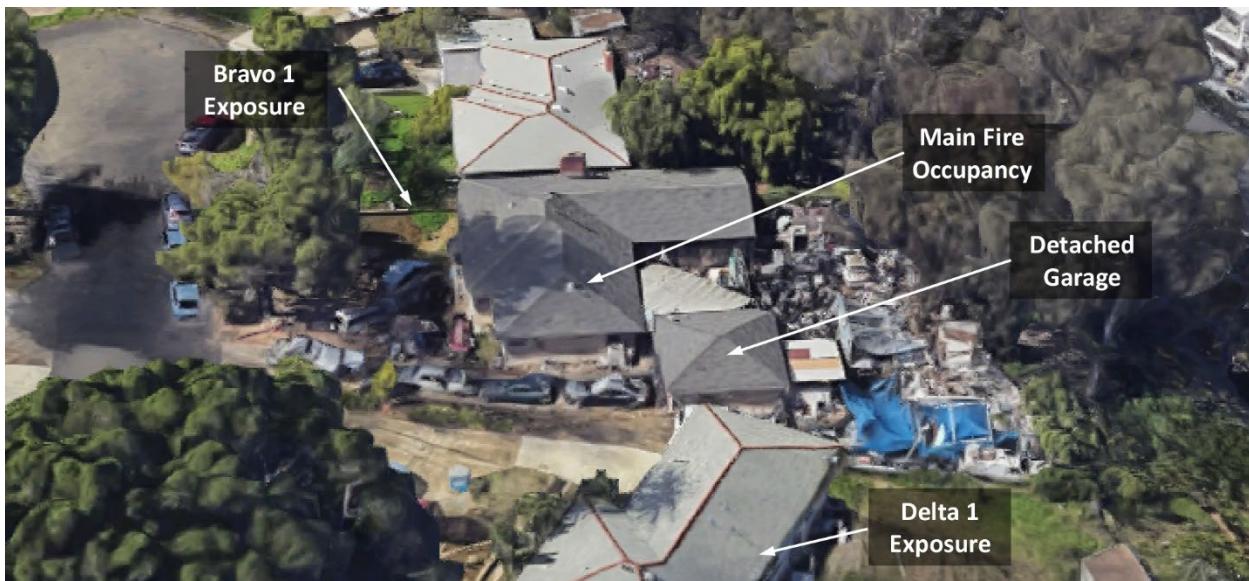
Note: Adapted from Google. (2022b). [Street view 3123 Chateau Way, Lemon Grove, CA].
<https://bit.ly/3F303oI>.

Figure 5. Alpha/Bravo Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022c). [Street view 3123 Chateau Way, Lemon Grove, CA].
<https://bit.ly/3Q3QUIZ>.

Figure 6. Side Delta 3D Aerial



Note: Adapted from Google. (2023c). [3d aerial view 3123 Chateau Way, Lemon Grove, CA]. <https://bit.ly/45ztqKI>.

You have been dispatched to 3123 Chateau Way for a residential fire at 05:10. You are responding to this incident as the first arriving command officer. Temperature is 63° F with no appreciable wind from the north (Weather Underground, 2023). While responding you hear four engines, an advanced life support (ALS) ambulance, and a second command officer go enroute. The engines have staffing typical of your agency.

The first engine will arrive from the south on Chateau Way. The second engine and ALS ambulance approximately six minutes after the first. The third engine will arrive ten minutes after the first arriving engine. Make a note of your resource and staffing assumptions prior to continuing with this 10-Minute Training. **You will arrive from the east pm Central Avenue after the third company.** Any additional resources on the first alarm (based on your response plan) 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 one-story house with a detached garage, working fire in the garage and on the Charlie/Delta Corner of the house, stretching an attack line for fire control, on a hydrant, offensive strategy, initiating Chateau Command, continue the assignment.

Engine 1 provides the following update report:

No 360 due to obstructions, possible hoarding conditions, large number of occupants evacuated the house with no all clear, continuing offensive, dispatch a second alarm and an additional medic unit. Level two staging two blocks west at on Central Avenue.

Engine 2 and Medic 2 arrive and advise Chateau Command they are Level 1. Chateau Command provides the following orders to Engine 2 and Medic 2.

Medic 2, park out of the way, evaluate the evacuated occupants across the street from the main fire occupancy and advise on the number of patients and needs.

Engine 2, park out of the way, stretch an attack line off Engine 1, through Side Alpha for fire control and primary search. Engine 1 is continuing fire control on the Charlie/Delta Corner and in the garage.

Engine 3 arrives and advises Chateau Command they are Level 1. Chateau Command provides the following orders to Engine 3 and Engine 2

Engine 3, park out of the way, stretch an attack line off Engine 1, go on deck Side Alpha.

Watch the [incident video](#) (911 Video News, 2023) from 00:15 to 00:42 and examine Figure 7 illustrating conditions on your arrival.

Figure 7. Conditions on Arrival of Chief 1



Note: Adapted from 911 Video News. (2023). Lemon Grove: 2nd alarm house fire 09272023.

<https://bit.ly/3RO4Txx>.

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

Prior to contacting IC #1 to initiate transfer of command, you hear the following radio traffic between Engine 2 and IC #1.

Chateau Command, Engine 2 with priority traffic.

Engine 2 go with your priority traffic.

We have hoarding conditions and a working fire in the attic, applying water with limited effect, need an additional company to assist with fire control in the attic.

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

Watch the [incident video](#) (911 Video News, 2023) from 01:08 to 01:30 (changing conditions) as you complete the command transfer. Following your confirmation of the location and assignment of Engines 1, 2, and Engine 3 and request for a conditions, actions, and needs (CAN) report, IC #1 provides the following CAN:

That is correct. We have hoarding conditions on Side Charlie exterior and a partial roof collapse in detached garage. Recommend defensive strategy in the garage and need an additional company to assist with fire control in the garage.

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

After completing the command transfer and strategic shift to defense in the garage, you receive the following radio communication from Medic 2.

Command, Medic 2

Eleven occupants evacuated from the house, all accounted for. No patients. Administering O₂ to one canine with smoke inhalation. No needs.

5. What action would you take based on the CAN from Engine 1 (IC #1) and Medic 2. State the communications you would have with the operating companies exactly as you would transmit them.

Engine 4 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 at Central Ave and Chateau Way.

6. State the tactical assignment that you will give Engine 4 exactly as you would transmit it.
7. Chief 2 arrives and advises that they are Level 1. State the assignment you will give Chief 2 exactly as you would transmit it.

Watch the [incident video](#) (911 Video News, 2023) from 05:03 to 10:00 before answering the next two questions.

8. Companies operating at this incident remained in an offensive strategy for an extended period. Was this consistent with your incident action plan? What factors influenced your choice to remain offensive in the main fire occupancy or to implement a strategic shift to defense?
9. Companies operating at this incident implemented vertical ventilation of the main fire occupancy. What impact does this ventilation tactic have on fire behavior? Did vertical ventilation have a positive, negative, or neutral impact on the incident outcome?

Additional Learning: Read [Tactical Considerations for Hoarding Fires](#) (Pennington, 2021) and have a look at the [Chamber of Hoarders](#) website (Pennington, 2018) and review tactical considerations for fires in occupancies with hoarding conditions with your crews. Discuss where hoarding conditions have been encountered in your response area and how these conditions would impact incident operations.

References

911 Video News. (2023). Lemon Grove: 2nd alarm house fire 09272023. Retrieved October 6, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/3RO4Txx>.

Google. (2022a). [Street view 3123 Chateau Way, Lemon Grove, CA]. Retrieved October 6, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/45hk99y>.

Google. (2022b). [Street view 3123 Chateau Way, Lemon Grove, CA]. Retrieved October 6, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/3F303ol>.

Google. (2022c). [Street view 3123 Chateau Way, Lemon Grove, CA]. Retrieved October 6, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/3Q3QUIZ>.

Google. (2023a). [Map, 3123 Chateau Way, Lemon Grove, CA]. Retrieved October 6, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/3rKziCj>.

Google. (2023b). [Aerial view 3123 Chateau Way, Lemon Grove, CA]. Retrieved October 6, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/46AGAax>.

Google. (2023c). [3d aerial view 3123 Chateau Way, Lemon Grove, CA]. Retrieved October 6, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/45ztqKI>.

Heartland Fire & Rescue. (2023). [Facebook post]. Retrieved October 6, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/46B4CIU>.

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). (n.d.). *Hoarding: issues for the fire service*. Retrieved October 6, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/3rFJ2xP>.

Pennington, R. (2018). *Chamber of hoarders* [website]. Retrieved October 6, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/46I9qMq>.

Pennington, R. (2021). *Tactical considerations for hoarding fires*. Retrieved October 6, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/3Z05X6D>.

Weather Underground (2023). *San Diego, CA weather history* [historical weather September 27, 2023]. Retrieved October 6, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/3rCCu35>.