



# In-Station Training

## TM 23-45 Townhouse Fire



### Author

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### Purpose

Layout and configuration have a significant impact on fire in multi-unit residential occupancies. Center corridor, garden style, and townhouse apartment each present issues related to layout and configuration. In addition, apartment complexes often have challenging limited access and may be set back from the street, requiring long hose stretches.

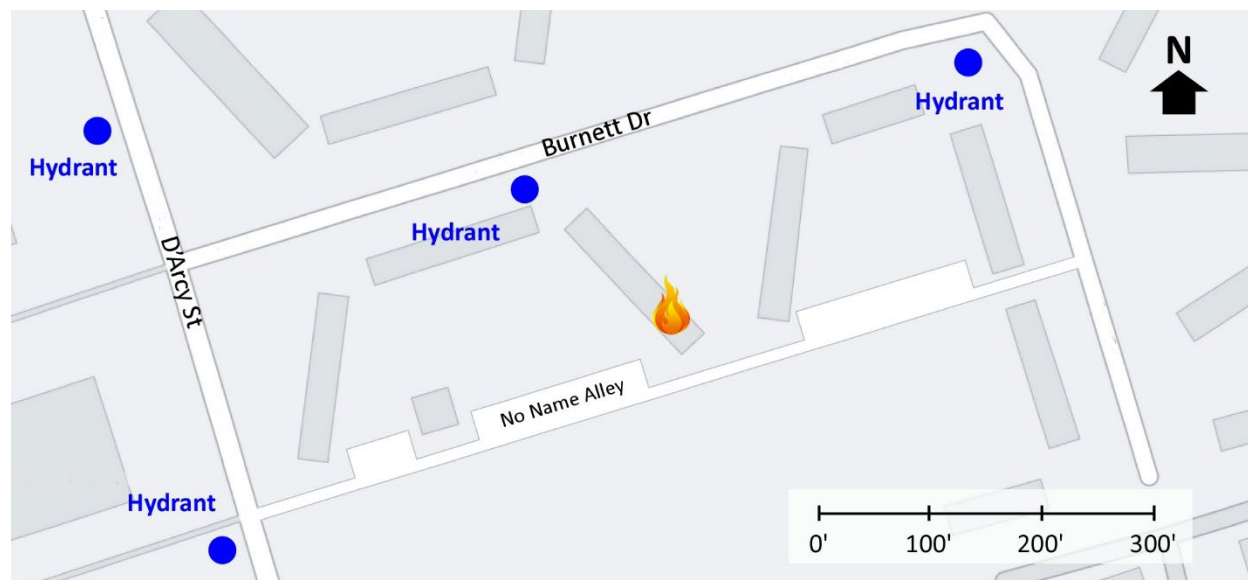
### Learning Outcomes

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

### Conducting the Drill

This incident involved an apartment fire at 463 Burnett Drive, Cobourg, Ontario, Canada on September 23, 2023, at 9:40 (Fisher, 2023 & Today's Northumberland, 2023). Review the map and photos (Figures 1-5) to gain an understanding of the area and building involved.

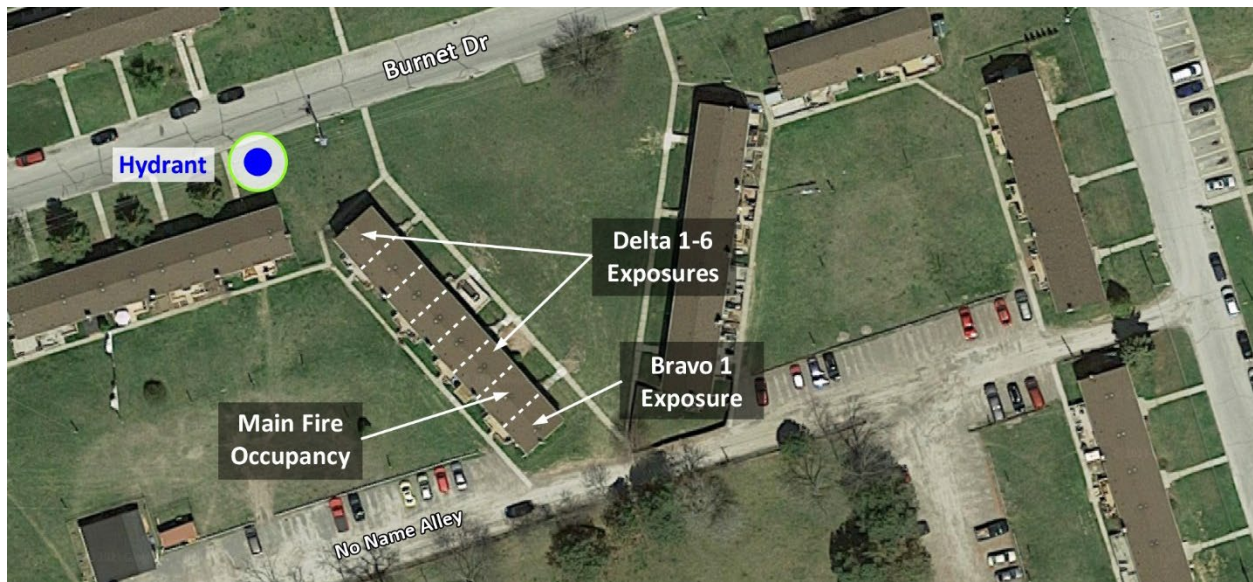
Figure 1. Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2023a). [Map, 463 Burnett Drive, Cobourg, ON, Canada].

<https://bit.ly/3RZla1V>.

Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2023b). [Aerial view, 463 Burnett Drive, Cobourg, ON, Canada].  
<https://bit.ly/3FlkyND>.

The closest hydrant is adjacent to the incident location on Burnett Drive. Additional hydrants are located on Burnett Drive and D'Arcy Street. For the purposes of this 10-Minute Training, the main entry side of the fire building (northeast) is designated as Side Alpha (even though the building address is Burnett Drive due to the primary access location).

Figure 3. Side Delta



Note: Adapted from Google. (2009a). [Street view, 463 Burnett Drive, Cobourg, ON, Canada].  
<https://bit.ly/46vzXa4>.

Figure 4. Alpha/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2009b). [Street view, 463 Burnett Drive, Cobourg, ON, Canada].  
<https://bit.ly/3rRgNwa>.

Figure 5. Unnamed Alley off D'Arcy Street



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022c). [Street view, D'Arcy Street, Cobourg, ON, Canada].  
<https://bit.ly/3S20Q12>.

The temperature is 63° F with wind from the east at 7 mph (Weather Underground, 2023). You have been dispatched to 463 Burnett Drive for a report of an apartment fire at 09:40. You are the company officer or AIC of the first arriving engine and have your company's typical staffing.

1. What critical factors would you consider when dispatched and during response and what conversations would you have with your crew while responding?

While responding, you hear a command officer and another engine with typical staffing for your agency go enroute. You will arrive from the east on Burnett Avenue. The second engine will arrive eight minutes after you, followed by the command officer. All other units dispatched on the first alarm will arrive after the command officer.

The incident video starts after arrival. Examine Figure 6 which illustrates conditions on arrival (photo has been edited to remove tactical action by the first arriving company).

Figure 6. Conditions on Arrival (view from Burnett Drive)



*Note:* Adapted from Fisher, P. (2023). *Town house fire Cobourg September 23, 2023* [video]. <https://bit.ly/3s19vpA>.

2. State your initial radio report (IRR) exactly as you would transmit it to dispatch.
3. What specific actions would you take (as the company officer) immediately upon arrival and exiting the apparatus and what task orders you would give your crew?

Several occupants of the apartment building are outside, but do not have clear information about the occupants of the main fire occupancy. Conditions on Side Charlie are illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Conditions on Side Charlie Shortly After Arrival



*Note:* Adapted from Fisher, P. (2023). *Town house fire Cobourg September 23, 2023* [video]. <https://bit.ly/3s19vpA>.

4. Would you change the action you are taking or modify the assignments given to your crew? If so, what task orders would you provide?
5. State your update report exactly as you would transmit it to dispatch.
6. Engine 2 arrives and reports that they are Level 1, on a hydrant on D'Arcy Street at the no name alley. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.
7. Based on the anticipated effectiveness of your tactical operations, state your conditions, actions, and needs (CAN) report that you would provide to the first arriving command officer as part of command transfer to IC #2?

Watch the first 02:00 of the [incident video](#) (Fisher, 2023) before answering the next several questions.

8. The first arriving company was positioned in the alley closest to the fire occupancy. Was this the same or different than the apparatus position you selected? What factors influenced your choice of apparatus position?
9. What was the likely effect of leaving the front door open while preparing to make entry for fire control?
10. How could the first arriving company have improved their stretch on the exterior to facilitate quick water on the fire, making entry through Side Alpha?
11. Given the fire conditions on Side Charlie, would it have been advantageous to make a quick hit from Side Charlie before entry? What would have been the advantages and disadvantages of this tactic?
12. What hazards would be presented by the arcing electrical service drop on Side Charlie? What steps could be taken to address these hazards.

**Additional Learning:** Review [Fires in Residential and Commercial Townhouses and Rowhouses](#) (NOVA Fire Operations Board, 2022). This manual provides an excellent overview of townhouse configuration and firefighting tactical considerations. Note that the agencies in this area use order of arrival tactical assignments rather than IC driven assignments based on the incident's critical factors (as used in Blue Card).

Get out in your response area and identify townhouse occupancies and do a tactical walk around and discuss access, arrangement, and tactical considerations with your crew.

## References

- Fisher, P. (2023). *Town house fire Cobourg September 23, 2023* [video]. Retrieved October 15, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/3s19vpA>.
- Google. (2009a). [Street view, 463 Burnett Drive, Cobourg, ON, Canada]. Retrieved October 15, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/46vzXa4>.
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- Northern Virginia (NOVA) Fire Operations Board. (2022). Fire and rescue departments of Northern Virginia firefighting and emergency operations manual: fires in residential and commercial townhouses and rowhouses, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Retrieved October 15, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/3ZVAgbC>.
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