



# In-Station Training

## TM 24-22 Vacant Commercial Fire



### Author

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### Purpose

Fires in vacant buildings under demolition present a wide range of structural hazards. In addition, vacant buildings are often occupied by the unhoused, potentially presenting life hazard as a critical factor.

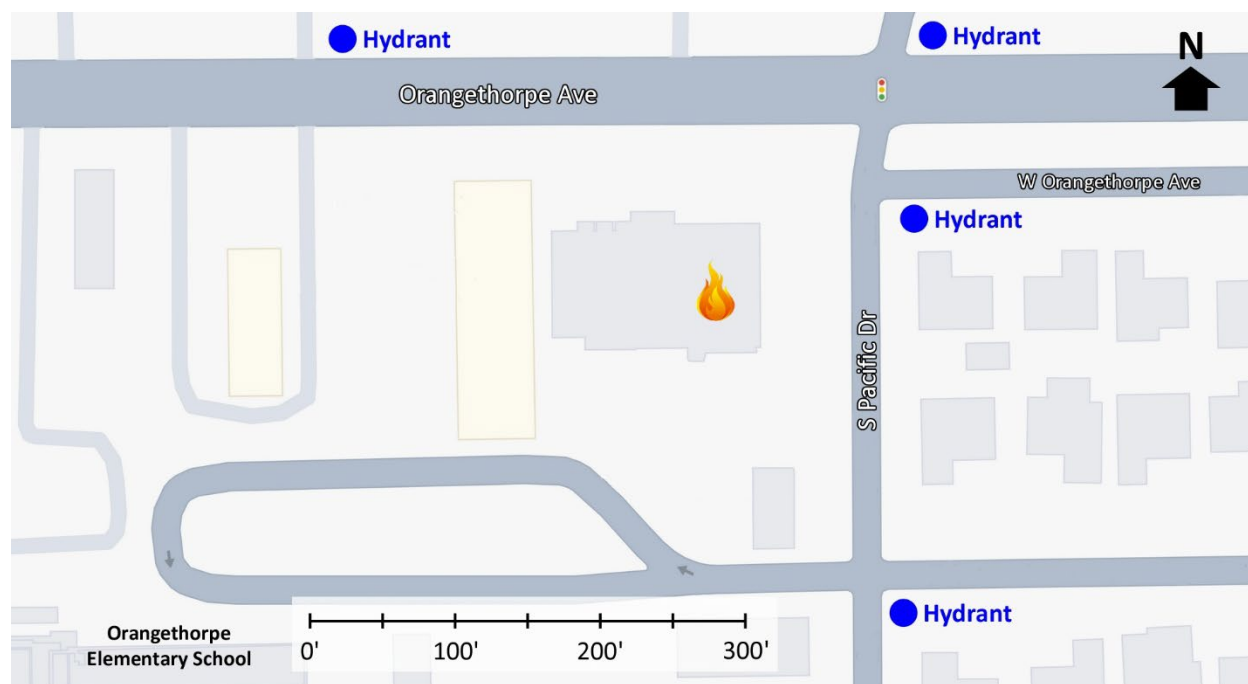
### Learning Outcomes

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 a commercial fire in a vacant building at 1700 Orangethorpe Avenue in Fullerton, California on January 22, 2024, at 13:23 (OC Hawk, 2024 & Darwish, 2024). Review the map and photos (Figures 1-8) to gain an understanding of the area and building involved.

Figure 1. Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2024a). [Map, 1700 Orangethorpe Avenue, Fullerton, CA].

<https://bit.ly/3VV8oVh>.

Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2024b). [Aerial view 1700 Orangethorpe Avenue, Fullerton, CA].  
<https://bit.ly/3UddkDz>.

There are multiple hydrants adjacent to the fire location on Orangethorpe Avenue and South Pacific Drive as shown in Figure 1.

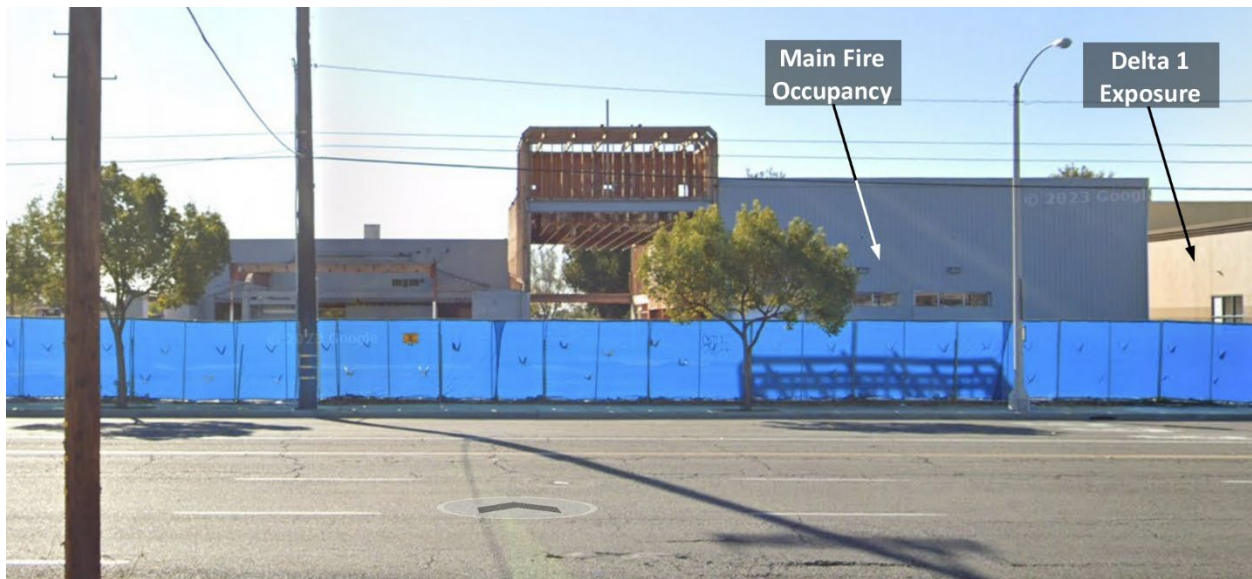
Figure 3. Alpha/Bravo Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022a). [Street view, 1700 Orangethorpe Avenue, Fullerton, CA].  
<https://bit.ly/3xATqtq>.



Figure 4. Side Alpha



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022b). [Street view, 1700 Orangethorpe Avenue, Fullerton, CA].  
<https://bit.ly/3QnhVkr>.

Figure 5. Alpha/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022c). [Street view, 1700 Orangethorpe Avenue, Fullerton, CA].  
<https://bit.ly/3PZ9xqN>.

Figure 6. Side Bravo



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022d). [Street view, 1700 Orangethorpe Avenue, Fullerton, CA].  
<https://bit.ly/3xGedeS>.

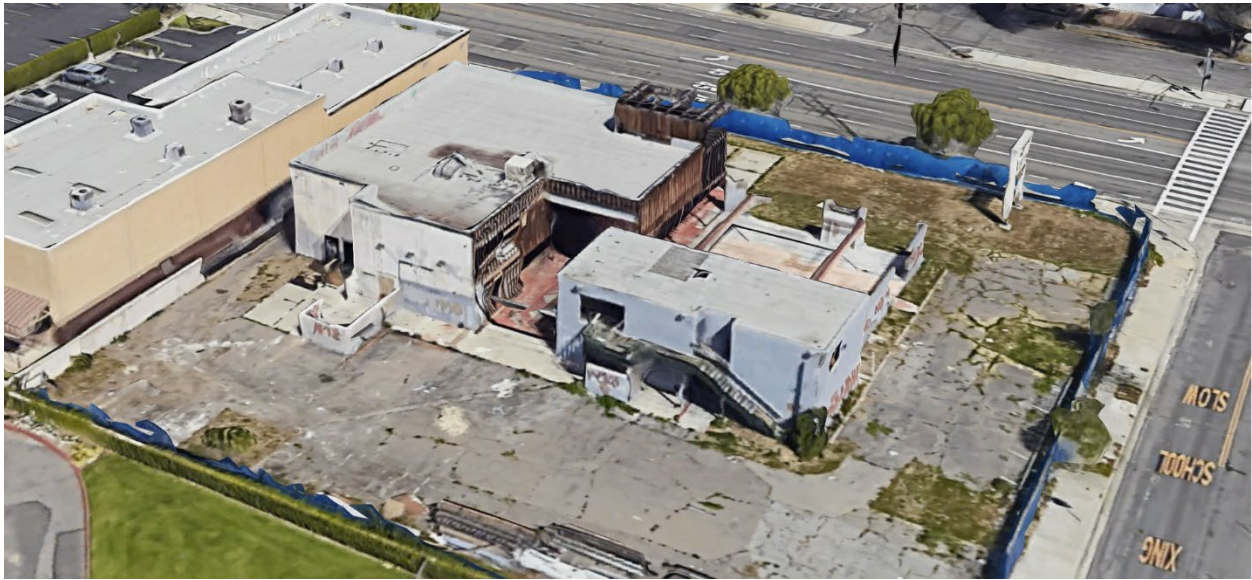
Figure 7. Alpha/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2024c). [3d aerial view, 1700 Orangethorpe Avenue, Fullerton, CA].  
<https://bit.ly/3xGedeS>.



Figure 8. Bravo/Charlie Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2024d). [3d aerial view, 1700 Orangethorpe Avenue, Fullerton, CA].  
<https://bit.ly/3JhZXLY>.

The temperature is currently 60° F with wind from the north at 5 mph (Weather Underground, 2024). You have been dispatched to the intersection of Orangethorpe Avenue and Pacific Drive for a commercial fire. 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?

Dispatch provides an update that multiple calls are being received of a fire in a vacant commercial building on the southwest corner of this intersection. You are familiar with this location as the building has been vacant for over 15 years. Demolition started on the building five years ago, but stalled and there has been no activity at the site since that time. You hear a command officer, three other engines, and an advanced life support ambulance with typical staffing for your agency go enroute. You will arrive from the west on Orangethorpe Avenue. The second engine will arrive from the same direction six minutes after you. The command officer will arrive shortly after the second engine. All other units dispatched on the first alarm will arrive after the command officer.

Watch the first 00:13 of the [incident video](#) (OC Hawk, 2024) and examine Figure 9 illustrating conditions on arrival.

Figure 9. Conditions on Arrival



Note: Adapted from OC Hawk. (2024). *Fullerton 2nd alarm commercial fire* [video].  
<https://bit.ly/44cPN9n>.

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?

Watch the [incident video](#) (OC Hawk, 2024) from 01:28 to 01:42 and examine Figure 10 illustrating conditions during initial incident operations.

Figure 10. Alpha/Bravo Corner Shortly After Gaining Access



Note: Adapted from OC Hawk. (2024). *Fullerton 2nd alarm commercial fire* [video].

<https://bit.ly/44cPN9n>

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 Orangethorpe Avenue. 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.

Reflect on your strategic decision-making and responses to questions 1 through 7 before answering the next six questions.

8. What was the problem?

9. What was getting in the way of achieving your tactical priorities?

10. Was there anything in this incident that could have hurt or killed you (right now)?

11. Was it reasonable to believe that the building was occupied?

12. Was there searchable space?

13. If you believed it was reasonable that the building was occupied and there was searchable space, what could you do about it?

Watch the [incident video](#) (OC Hawk, 2024) from 01:42 to 02:40 before answering the next question.

14. A 2 ½" attack line was deployed and operated on the Alpha/Bravo corner. Was this line effective? Why or why not?

Watch the [incident video](#) (OC Hawk, 2024) from 03:45 to 04:05 before answering the next question.

15. Multiple 2 ½" attack lines and one or more elevated master streams were used for defensive fire control. Which of these tactical options was most effective? Why?



**Additional Learning:** Discuss engine company options for defensive fire control with your crew. Consider 2 ½" attack lines, portable master streams (Blitzfire), and apparatus mounted master streams. Identify applications where each of these tools can be used to implement a defensive strategy. Also discuss options for use of elevated master streams for defensive fire control. Under what circumstances would an elevated master stream (or more than one) be the most appropriate water application method?

Review hydraulics for large handline and master stream operations with your crew using the East County Fire and Rescue Apparatus Operator Job Aid.

Get out and stretch some hose! Practice deployment of attack lines, portable master streams, and apparatus mounted master streams for defensive operations.

## References

- Darwish, M. (2024). *Commercial building fire causes nearby Fullerton elementary school to shelter in place*. Retrieved April 12, 2024, from <https://bit.ly/49tZL7f>.
- Google. (2022a). [Street view, 1700 Orangethorpe Avenue, Fullerton, CA]. Retrieved April 12, 2024, from <https://bit.ly/3xATqtq>.
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