



# In-Station Training

## TM 25-14 Apartment Fire



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### Purpose

Fires in multi-unit residential occupancies can present a significant life hazard. The challenge faced by fire companies operating at this type of incident is increased in older, renovated buildings with unique layout and configuration. If staffing permits, coordinated fire control and search are conducted simultaneously. If staffing does not permit concurrent fire control and search, the IC is faced with the need to prioritize the sequence of tactical operations.

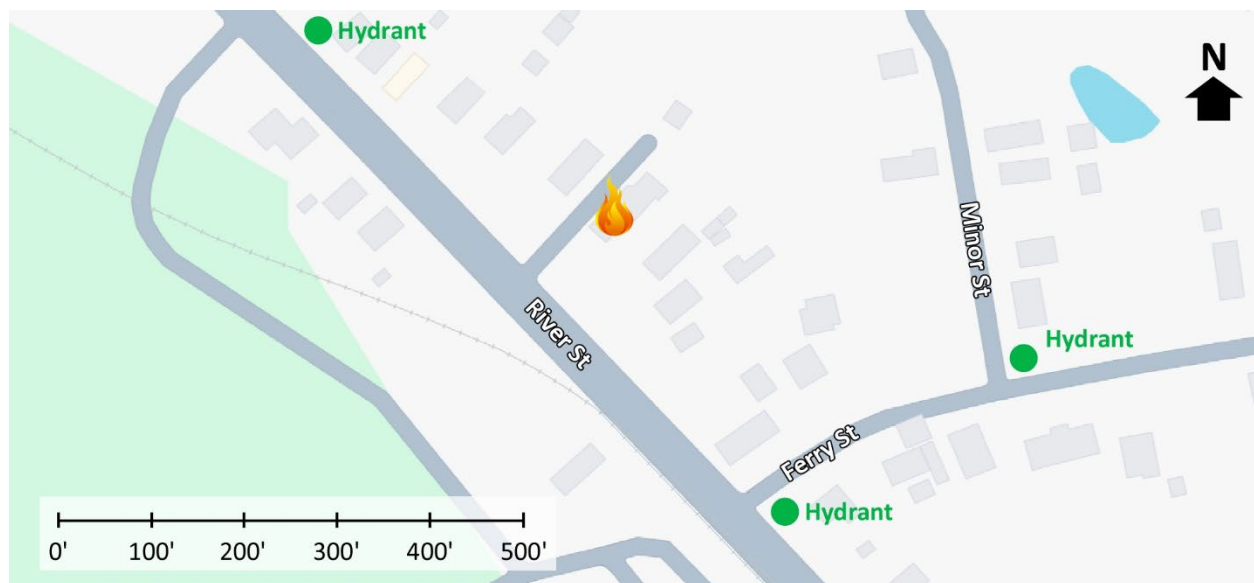
### Learning Outcomes

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 78 River Street, Hudson Falls, New York on Thursday, January 30, 2025, at 17:32 (Tri-County Fire Videos, 2025; WNYT, 2025; & Broadcastify 2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d, 2025e). 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. (2025a). [Map, 78 River Street, Hudson Falls, NY]. <https://bit.ly/3WGxbfi>.

There are two hydrants approximately equidistant from the incident location on River Street with an additional hydrant at Ferry and Minor Streets as illustrated in Figure 1. This building was originally built in 1920 (Redfin, 2017) and appears to have undergone multiple renovations and additions since its construction.

Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025b). [Aerial view 78 River Street, Hudson Falls, NY]. <https://bit.ly/3EsXlf2>.

Figure 3. Alpha/Bravo Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2024a). [Street view 78 River Street, Hudson Falls, NY]. <https://bit.ly/3EvRIIG>.

Figure 4. Alpha/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2024b). [Street view 78 River Street, Hudson Falls, NY]. <https://bit.ly/4hGB0ct>.

Figure 5. Bravo/Charlie Corner



Note: Adapted from Redfin. (2017). 78 River St, Hudson Falls, NY 12839. <https://bit.ly/3EkKiwo>.

The temperature is currently 16° F with wind from the southeast at 6 mph (Weather Underground, 2025). **You are the company officer of an engine company.** It is Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, and you have been dispatched along with two other engines, a ladder company, medic unit, and command officer at 17:32 to River Street across from the Waste Management Plant for a structure fire. The engines and ladder have four-person staffing<sup>1</sup>.



Time starts now! Answer the first eight questions within the next 10 minutes. Decide and put your answers in the form of communication you would have with your crew, other companies, and the first arriving command officer. Save discussion for after answering the first eight questions.

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

You hear a command officer, two other engines, a ladder company, and an advanced life support ambulance go en route. Your fire station is located less than a mile from the reported address, and you will arrive first, approaching from the southeast on River Street. The ladder company will arrive from the same direction two minutes after you. The second engine will arrive from the northwest shortly after the ladder company. The command officer will arrive shortly after the second engine. All other units dispatched on the first alarm will arrive after the command officer.

While responding, dispatch advises multiple callers reporting a fire at 78 River Street and that there are occupants in the driveway, unknown if occupied. A subsequent update advises “fully involved, possible entrapment”. Examine Figures 6 and 7 illustrating conditions on arrival (the incident video starts after the arrival of the first engine).

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<sup>1</sup> If your first alarm deployment is different, use your own resource assignment and staffing with the first and second arriving resources typical for your agency (e.g., two engines vs. engine and ladder).

Figure 6. Conditions on Arrival-Alpha/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Tri-County Fire Videos. (2025). *Hudson Falls Fire, working structure fire, 1-30-2025.* <https://bit.ly/4gm0FWK>.

Figure 7. Conditions on Arrival-Alpha/Bravo Corner



Note: Adapted from Tri-County Fire Videos. (2025). *Hudson Falls Fire, working structure fire, 1-30-2025.* <https://bit.ly/4gm0FWK>.

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 would you give your crew?

Conditions on Side Charlie, and Delta are consistent with those observed on Sides Alpha, Bravo, and Delta with little smoke visible from the building towards Side Charlie. An occupant reports that “everyone is out of the building”. You observe the utilities illustrated in Figure 8 during your initial reconnaissance.

Figure 8. 78 River Street Electric and Gas Utilities



*Note:* Adapted from Redfin. (2017). 78 River St, Hudson Falls, NY 12839. <https://bit.ly/3EkKiwo>.

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.

Watch the first 00:30 of the [incident video](#) (Tri-County Fire Videos, 2025) before answering the next several questions.

6. Ladder 1 advises that they are Level 1 on River Street at Ferry Street. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.
  
7. Engine 2 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on a hydrant to the northwest on River Street. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.
  
8. 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 one through eight before answering the next six questions. Give some thought to what cues, patterns, or anomalies (differences from conditions that you would anticipate) inform your answers.

9. What was the problem?
  
10. What was getting in the way of achieving your tactical priorities?
  
11. Was there anything in this incident that could have hurt or killed you (right now)?
  
12. Was it reasonable to believe that the Main Fire Occupancy was occupied?
  
13. Was there searchable space?
  
14. 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](#) (Tri-County Fire Videos, 2025) from 00:30 to 02:00 before answering the next several questions that are based on actual incident operations. Note that there are several breaks in the incident video. The total elapsed incident operational time represented by this 90 seconds of video is unknown.

15. Fire control operations were initiated from the exterior on Side Alpha with a small (1 ¾") attack line from Side Alpha. Was this consistent with your incident action plan? What factors influenced your initial choice of attack position, attack line (or other water application method), and flow rate?

Examine Figure 9 illustrating water application through a window on Side Alpha prior to answering the next question.

Figure 9. Exterior Water Application from Side Alpha



*Note:* Adapted from Tri-County Fire Videos. (2025). *Hudson Falls Fire, working structure fire, 1-30-2025.* <https://bit.ly/4gmOFWK>.

16. What factors influenced the effectiveness of exterior water application from Side Alpha? Was effectiveness limited by attack position, distribution, flow rate, or a combination of these factors? How could effectiveness been improved?



17. Initially there was a report of trapped occupants and subsequently an occupant reported that everyone was out. How did this influence your tactical decision-making? How did you (or did you) address primary search? What critical factors influenced your decision-making related to search?

**Additional Learning:** Reading the fire requires recognizing critical factors related to building, smoke, air track (think flow paths), heat, and flame (B-SAHF). In the B-SAHF model of reading the fire, building is listed first as this is the “terrain” or the “ground” that firefighting operations take place in. In *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu (1991) advises generals to adapt their strategies to the ground they are fighting on.

The building involved in the incident presented in this 10-Minute Training was constructed in 1920 and appears to have been added onto and renovated multiple times. Wood frame buildings from the early 1800s to the early 1940s were commonly of balloon frame construction.

How does this type of wood frame construction influence fire behavior (including fire spread) and firefighting tactical operations? Read The [Fireman’s Guide to Main Street: The Old House](#) (Shady & Tobin, 2019) for a discussion of older (1850s to 1930s residential building construction).

Watch the [incident video](#) (Tri-County Fire Videos, 2025) from 04:39 to 06:35. Was the fire behavior in the incident video consistent with that you would expect with balloon frame construction? Why or why not?

In this incident, the incident commander (IC #2) ordered all companies withdraw from the building approximately 19 minutes after arrival. Shortly after the withdrawing companies from the interior, the IC began to assign companies to address limited water supply, with two companies assigned to establish a relay from a hydrant located approximately 1200 feet to the northwest at River Road and Warren Street. Nine minutes after withdrawing the IC advised that no interior operations would be conducted until the water supply is established (or reestablished) to Engine 361. Once the water supply was reestablished, companies returned to offensive, interior operations (Broadcastify, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d, 2025e).

What potential water supply issues might have occurred? Do you (or your apparatus operator) have contingency plans for these challenges?

Consider the difference between a tactical withdrawal due to loss of or inadequate water supply versus a strategic shift from offense to defense. If operating as the strategic IC (IC #2) at this incident, what factors might influence your decision to shift from an offensive to a defensive strategy?

Discuss the impact of the era of building construction and water supply on strategic and tactical decision-making with the members of our crew.

## References

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