



In-Station Training

TM 25-15 Apartment Fire



Author

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Purpose

With multi-unit residential occupancies, layout and configuration are critical considerations. Garden apartments, center corridor apartments, and townhouses all present different tactical challenges and considerations.

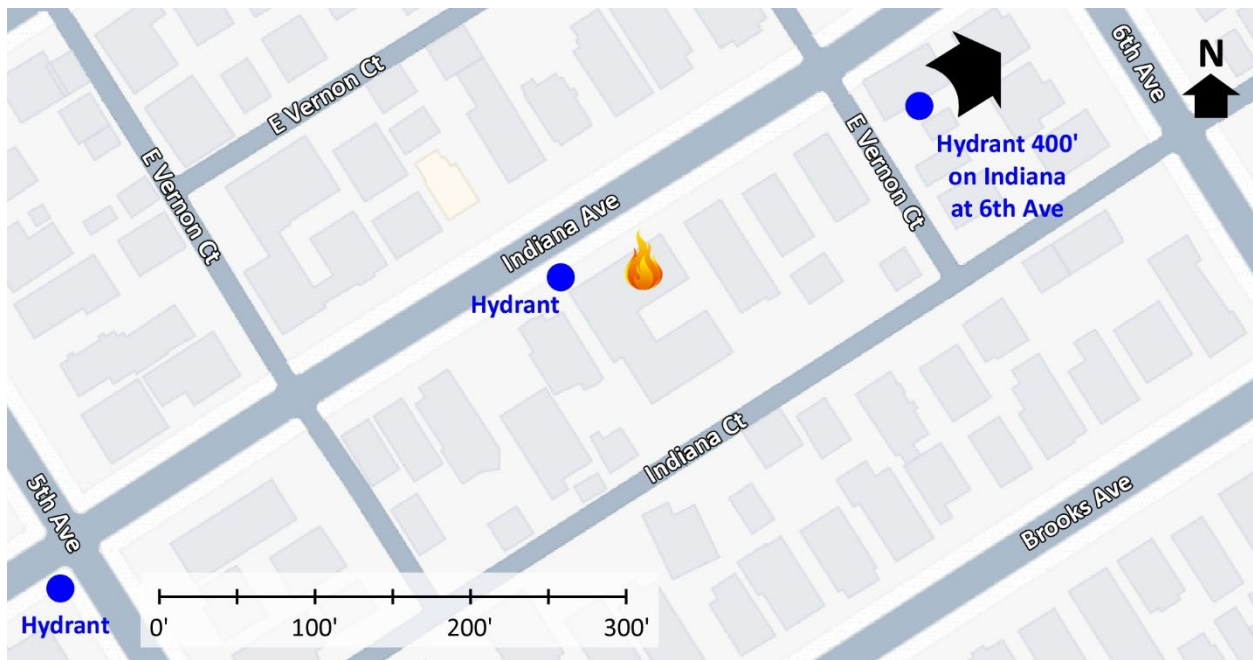
Learning Outcomes

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 534 Indiana Ave, Venice, California on Friday, January 10, 2025, at 08:11 (310 Fire, 2025; Yo Venice Staff, 2025; & LAFD, 2025). Review the map and photos (Figures 1-8) to gain an understanding of the area and building involved.

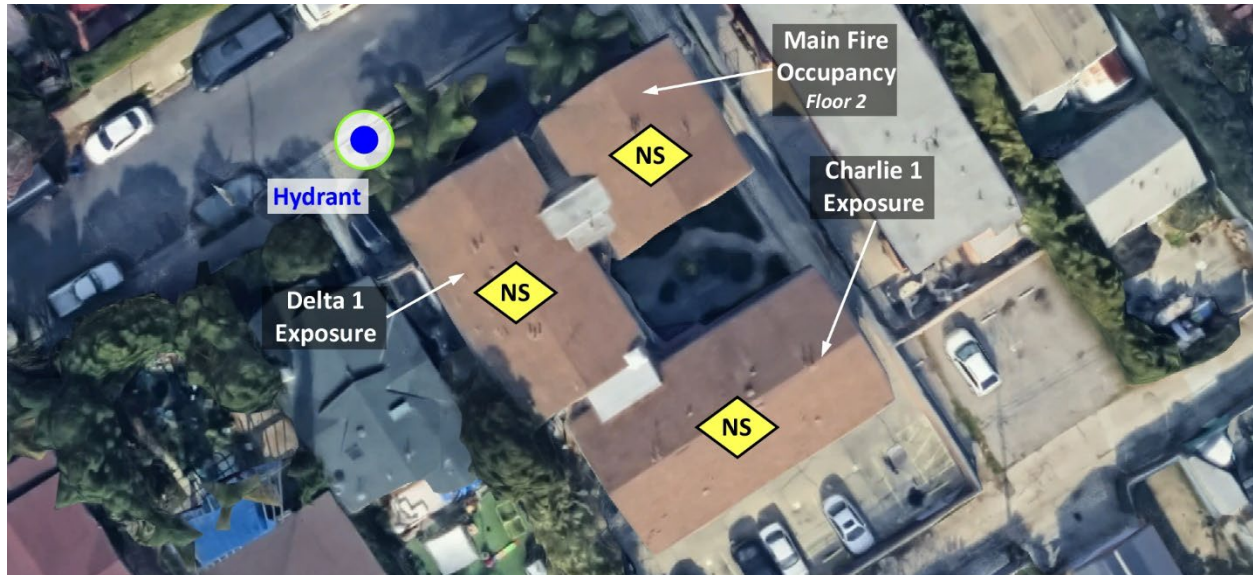
Figure 1 Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025a). [Map, 534 Indiana Ave, Venice, CA]. <https://bit.ly/3Q3cINN>.

The closest hydrant is on the Alpha/Delta Corner and additional hydrants are in the area as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 2 Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025b). [Aerial view 534 Indiana Ave, Venice, CA]. <https://bit.ly/40O6gzc>.

Figure 3. Alpha/Bravo Corner



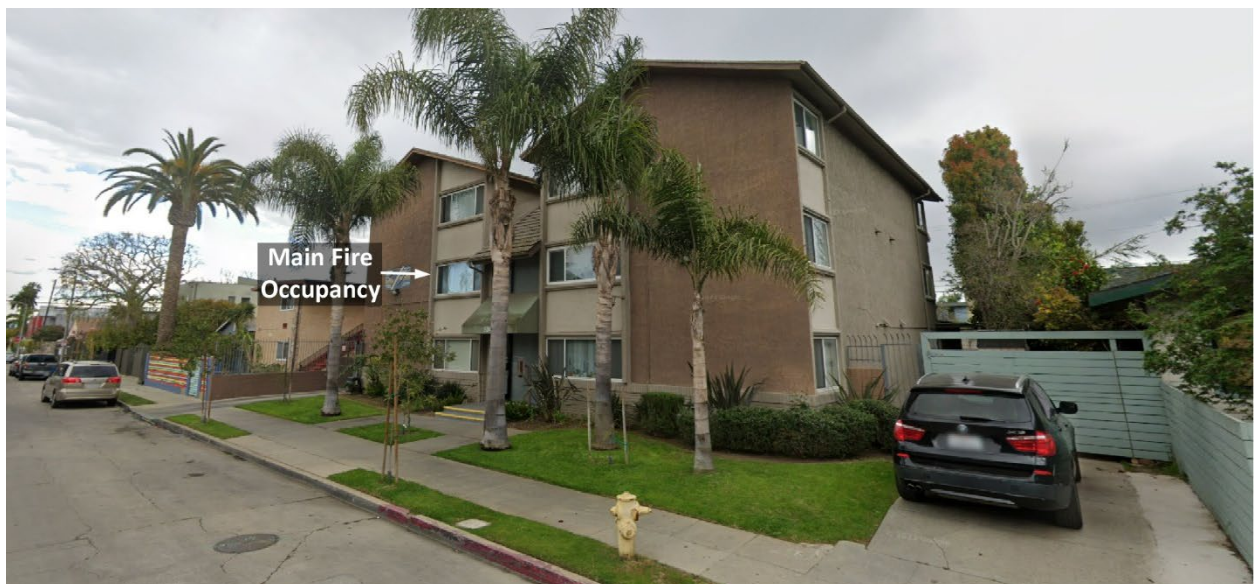
Note: Adapted from Google. (2022a). [Street view 534 Indiana Ave, Venice, CA]. <https://bit.ly/40JXLVR>.

Figure 4. Side Alpha



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022b). [Street view 534 Indiana Ave, Venice, CA]. <https://bit.ly/3CMK1BJ>.

Figure 5. Alpha/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022c). [Street view 534 Indiana Ave, Venice, CA]. <https://bit.ly/4hmSDy1>.

Figure 6. Charlie/Delta Corner



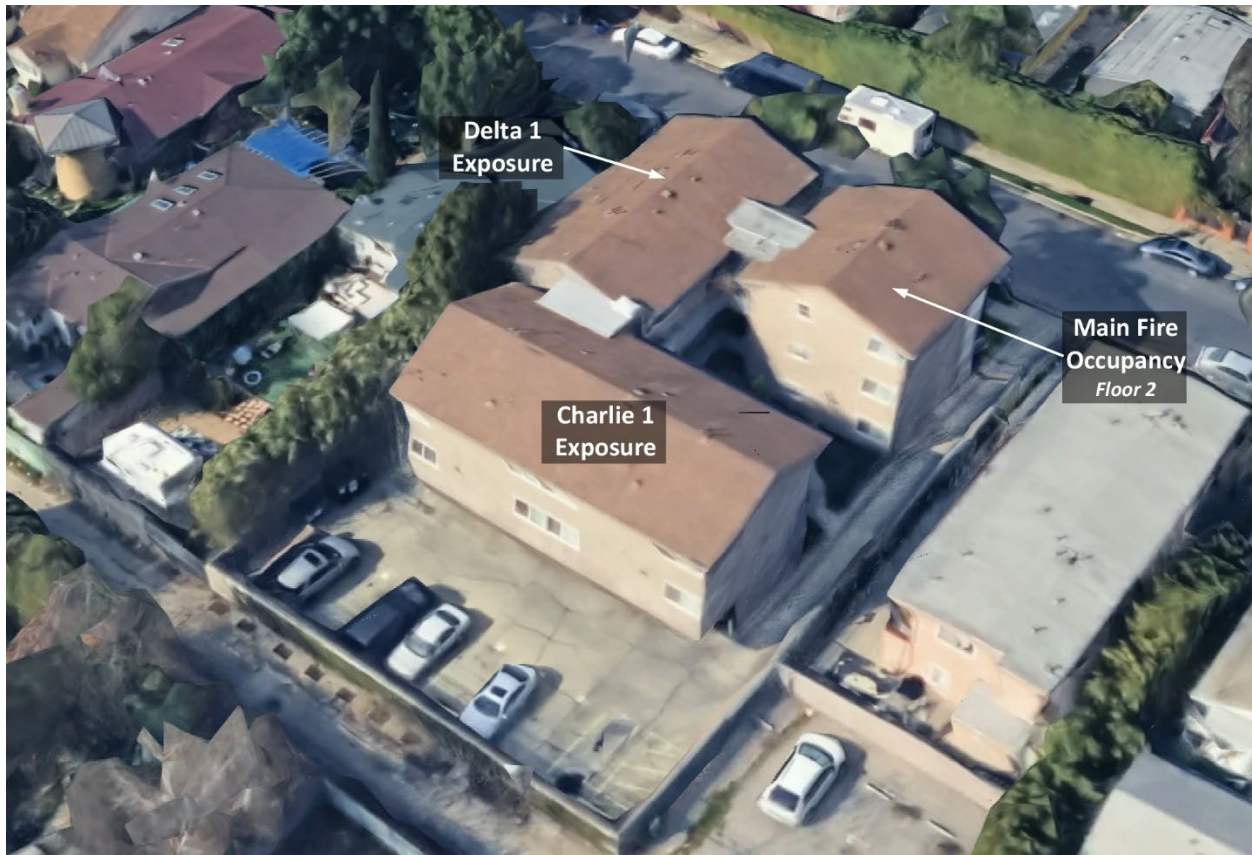
Adapted from Google. (2024a). [Street view 534 Indiana Ave, Venice, CA]. <https://bit.ly/4gxdoWy>.

Figure 7. Bravo/Charlie Corner



Adapted from Google. (2024b). [Street view 534 Indiana Ave, Venice, CA]. <https://bit.ly/42DCujm>.

Figure 8. Bravo/Charlie Aerial View



Adapted from Google. (2025c). [3d aerial view 534 Indiana Ave, Venice, CA]. <https://bit.ly/4jEjHKV>.

The temperature is currently 54° F with wind from the west northwest at 5 mph (Weather Underground, 2025). **You are the company officer of a ladder company.** It is Friday, January 10th, and you have been dispatched along with three engines, medic unit, and command officer at 08:11 to 534 Indiana Avenue for an apartment fire. The engines and ladder have four-person staffing¹.



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 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).

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, three engines, and an advanced life support ambulance go en route. Prior to response, you noticed that the closest engine company is on another call. You will arrive first, approaching from the northeast on Indiana Avenue. The first arriving engine company will arrive from the same direction two minutes after you. The second engine will arrive from the southwest shortly after the first engine company. The command officer will arrive 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 in a second-floor apartment at 534 Indiana Avenue. Watch the first 00:40 of the [incident video](#) (310 Fire, 2025) and examine Figure 9 illustrating conditions on arrival.

Figure 9. Conditions on Arrival-Alpha/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from 310 Fire. (2025). Venice Beach: apartment fire (Los Angeles). <https://bit.ly/4jMRB08>.

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?

You determine that this is a garden style apartment complex with an open central stairway to a partially enclosed hallway accessing units in the Main Fire Occupancy and the Delta 1 and Charlie 1 Exposures. The door to the Main Fire Occupancy is closed, but there is a limited volume of grey smoke pushing from around the door and from windows on Side Charlie.

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 [incident video](#) (310 Fire, 2025) from 00:40 to 01:10 before answering the next several questions.

6. Engine 1 advises that they are on-scene behind Ladder 1. 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 on Indiana Avenue at 5th Avenue. 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](#) (310 Fire, 2025) from 01:10 to 02:44 before answering the next several questions that are based on actual incident operations. Note that the staffing level of the Truck 63 (first arriving company) was five (officer, apparatus operator, and three firefighters) rather than the staffing level of four provided in this 10-Minute Training.

Initial actions taken by Truck 63 included deployment of a portable ladder to Side Charlie (two firefighters), reconnaissance in the stairwell (one firefighter), deployment of the aerial ladder to access the roof (apparatus operator), and incident command (captain serving as IC #1)

15. Were the initial actions of Truck 63 consistent with your initial incident action plan? Think about what was similar and what was different. What critical factors influenced your decisions?
16. At 02:34 in the incident video, a bystander reports there are people in the Delta 1 Exposure (no report of what floor). The apparatus operator tells the bystander to get them out before communicating this information face to face with IC #1. How would you have expected the apparatus operator to address this report? How would a report of occupants trapped in the Delta 1 exposure have impacted your action plan?

Watch the [incident video](#) (310 Fire, 2025) from 02:44 to 08:30. After transfer of command from IC #1 (Truck 63) to Battalion 4 (IC #2), IC #2 assigned Truck 63 to go to the roof (vertical ventilation) and to complete a 360. Truck 63 advised IC #2 of the report of trapped occupants and that they were initiating search. IC #2 acknowledged and changed their assignment to search.

17. How would you have communicated the report of trapped occupants to IC #2? State the communication, exactly as you would transmit it.

18. How would you approach primary search? Think about the Main Fire Occupancy, floors above and below, Exposure Delta 1 (all three floors), and Charlie 1 Exposure (all three floors). What would be your sequence for searching these units? Why?

19. How did the building, smoke, air track, heat, and flame fire behavior indicators change over the video sequence from 02:44 to 07:30? What is indicated by these changes in conditions?

20. At 08:13 in the incident video, Truck 37 reported that they had completed vertical ventilation with no extension into the attic. Given incident conditions, what are the advantages and disadvantages of using vertical ventilation? What alternative ventilation tactics might have been used in this incident?

Additional Learning: Read [Building Comprehension for the Fire Service: Understanding Garden Apartments](#) (Lattz, 2025) to gain some perspective on the impact of apartment building (or complex) design on firefighting operations. Consider the difference in terminology used to describe multi-unit residential occupancies (e.g., garden apartments, center corridor apartments, and townhouses or row houses).

Review principles of fire dynamics and the factors that impact coordinated ventilation and suppression tactics in multi-family residential structures by completing the on-line course [Coordination of Suppression and Ventilation in Multi-Family Dwellings](#) (UL FSRI, 2024). Get out into your response area and complete a tactical walk around of several different types of apartment buildings (single, standalone apartment building) and complexes (multiple apartment buildings within the same complex). Discuss the impact of arrangement, layout, and configuration with the members of your crew.

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