In-Station Training

TM 25-20a Warehouse Fire-Mayday

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Purpose

Operations at fires in big box occupancies are resource intensive and require effective support of fixed fire protection systems and coordination of fixed system operation and manual fire control and ventilation tactics. Effective incident organization and command safety are important in coordinating tactical operations and ensuring accountability in these resource intensive incidents.

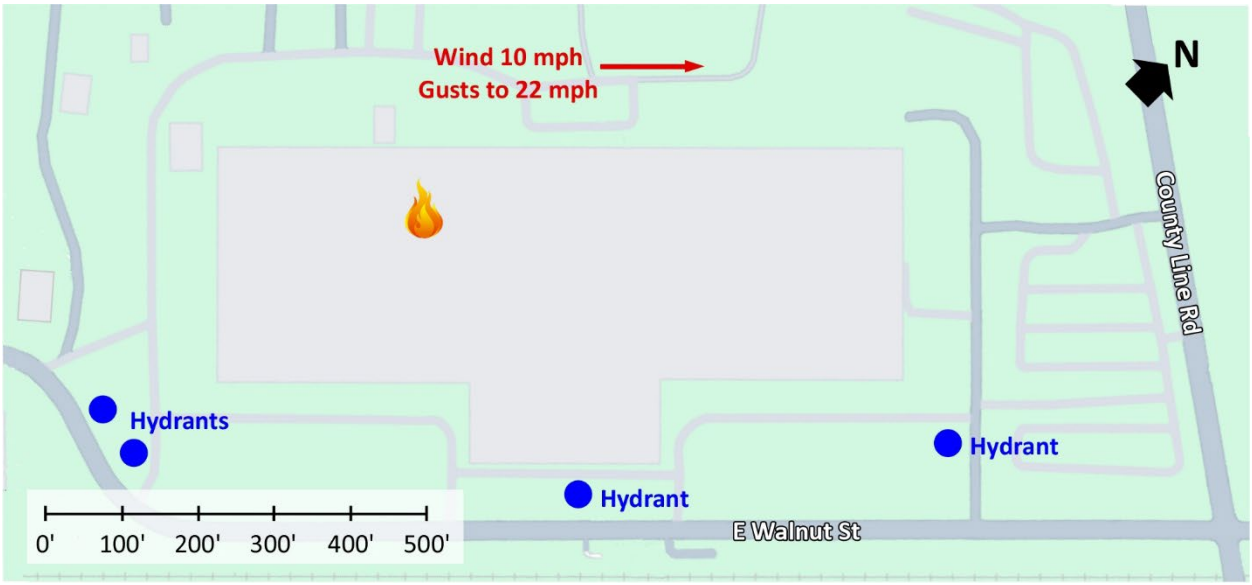
Learning Outcomes

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

Conducting the Drill

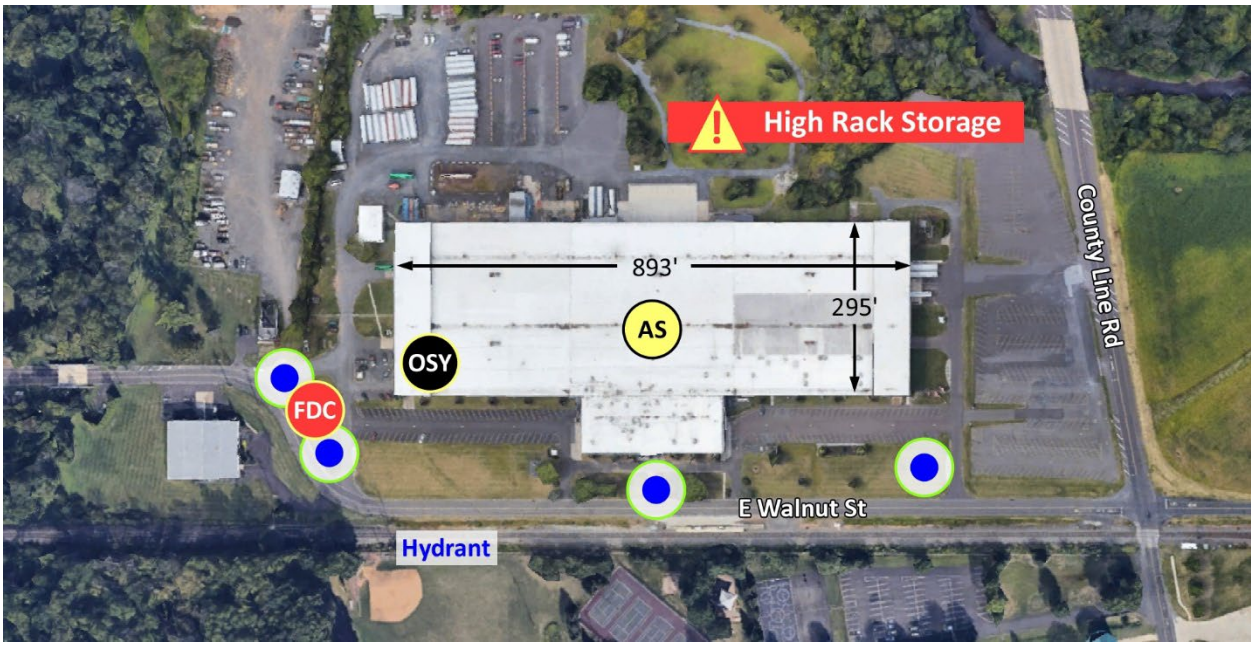
This incident involved a warehouse (big box) fire at Dorman Products, 3400 E Walnut Street in Colmar, Pennsylvania on November 5, 2024, at 13:30 (Di Domizio, 2024; Moyer & Pikora, 2024; & Tac4 Fireground Archives, 2024). Dorman Products is a manufacturer of aftermarket auto parts. Review the map and photos (Figures 1-10) to gain an understanding of the building and area involved.

Figure 1. Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025a). [Map, 3400 E Walnut Street, Colmar, PA]. https://bit.ly/4cCDXcC.

Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025b). [Aerial view 3400 E Walnut Street, Colmar, PA]. https://bit.ly/4cDiTmd.

The closest hydrants are on the Alpha/Bravo Corner with additional hydrants located on Side Alpha and the Alpha/Delta Corner as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 3. Side Bravo

Note: Adapted from Google. (2023a). [Street view 3400 E Walnut Street, Colmar, PA]. https://bit.ly/3RW8HM3.

Figure 4. Alpha/Bravo Corner

Note: Adapted from Google. (2023b). [Street view 3400 E Walnut Street, Colmar, PA]. https://bit.ly/4jJMvRq.

Figure 5. Side Alpha (Bravo End)

Note: Adapted from Google. (2023c). [Street view 3400 E Walnut Street, Colmar, PA]. https://bit.ly/3GjF19b.

Figure 6. Side Alpha-Main Entrance

Note: Adapted from Google. (2023d). [Street view 3400 E Walnut Street, Colmar, PA]. https://bit.ly/3GgclOp.

Figure 7. Alpha/Delta Corner

Note: Adapted from Google. (2023e). [Street view 3400 E Walnut Street, Colmar, PA]. https://bit.ly/3Gct854.

Figure 8. Side Delta

Note: Adapted from Google. (2023f). [Street view 3400 E Walnut Street, Colmar, PA]. https://bit.ly/3Y8fPJ3.

Figure 9. Side Charlie

Note: Adapted from Google. (2025c). [3d aerial view 3400 E Walnut Street, Colmar, PA]. https://bit.ly/3RqWcIf.

Figure 10. Side Charlie (Bravo End)

Note: Adapted from Google. (2025d). [3d aerial view 3400 E Walnut Street, Colmar, PA]. https://bit.ly/4juEgAe.

The temperature is currently 69° F with wind from the southwest at 10 mph with gusts to 22 mph (Weather Underground, 2024). **You are the first due command officer**. It is Tuesday, November 5th, and you have been dispatched along with **five** engines, **two** ladder companies, medic unit, and one additional command officer[1] at 13:30 to Dorman Products at 3400 E Walnut Street for a commercial fire. The engines and ladders have four-person staffing[2].

Time starts now! Answer the next 10 questions within 10 minutes. After answering question 1, decide and put your answers in the form of communication you would have with the companies assigned to this incident. Save discussion for after answering the first 10 questions.

1. What critical factors would you consider when dispatched and during response?

[1] Note that the deployment for a big box structure is five engines and two ladder companies due to the size of the building and resource requirements for safe and effective tactical operations. Additional alarms will each add the same resource deployment (i.e., second alarm will double the number of resources).

[2] 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).

You hear five engines, two ladder companies, and an advanced life support ambulance and another command officer go en route. The engine and ladder company will arrive from southwest on East Walnut Street. The second engine will arrive from the northeast several minutes after the ladder company. **You will arrive shortly after the second engine.** All other units dispatched on the first alarm will arrive after you.

While responding, dispatch advises that a caller reports a fire in the warehouse at Dorman Products with flames reaching the ceiling and spreading, they are attempting to evacuate. Dispatch then advises that they have received a pull station and water flow alarm from Dorman Products.

Engine 1 arrives and provides the following initial radio report.

> *On-scene of an extra-large, one story warehouse with a working fire on Side Charlie, forward lay to Side Charlie from the hydrant on the Alpha/Bravo corner, offensive strategy, Engine 1 is Dorman Command.*

Dorman Command provides the following follow-up report:

> *No 360 due to size, two story offices in the center of the building on Side Alpha, one story on all other sides, no basement, working fire in the Bravo/Charlie Quadrant, stretching an attack line on Side Charlie for fire control, Engine 1 is accountability on Side Charlie.*

Ladder 1 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on East Walnut Street. Dorman Command provides the following tactical assignment:

> *Position on Side Alpha near the Alpha/Bravo corner go to the roof and provide a roof report.*

Engine 2 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on a hydrant on East Walnut Street adjacent to the FDC. Dorman Command provides the following tactical assignment.

> *Have your apparatus operator supply the FDC and bring your crew to Side Charlie and integrate with Engine 1.*

Watch the first 00:30 of the incident simulation video (Hartin, 2025) and examine Figure 11 illustrating conditions on your arrival.

Figure 11. Conditions on Arrival

Note: Adapted from Hartin, E. (2025) *10-minute training 25-20a incident simulation* [Fire Studio 7 video]. https://bit.ly/3H7f2Cb.

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

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

Following your confirmation of the location and assignment of Engine 1, Ladder 1, and Engine 2 and request for a conditions, actions, and needs (CAN) report, IC #1 provides the following CAN:

> *The fire is located on Side Charlie in the Bravo/Charlie Quadrant, sprinklers are operating, have an attack line stretched to an open overhead door, need an on-deck company prior to entry.*

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

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

As you arrive, Ladder 1 provides you with the following roof report.

> *Roof is stable, no sagging, normal dead loads, smoke from multiple ventilators, air status 90%, need reassignment.*

6. Engine 3 arrives and advises you that they are Level 1 on a hydrant, East Walnut Street at the northeast entrance to Dorman Products.

Engine 1 advises that they (along with Engine 2) are stretching through Side Charlie for fire control. A short time later you receive the following radio message.

> *Command Engine 1 with priority traffic.*
>
> *The fire is in high rack storage; sprinklers and our attack line are having limited effect. Need an additional attack line for fire control.*

7. Engine 4 arrives and advises you that they are Level 1 on East Walnut Street southwest of the incident.

8. Chief 2 arrives and advises that they are Level 1 at East Walnut Street and County Line Road.

9. Ladder 2 arrives and advises that they are Level 1 at East Walnut Street and County Line Road

10. Engine 5 arrives and advises that they are Level 1 on County Line Road at East Walnut Street.

Reflect on your strategic decision-making and responses to questions one through ten 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.

11. What was the problem?

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

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

14. Was it reasonable to believe that the Main Fire Occupancy was occupied?

15. Was there searchable space?

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

You hear a garbled radio transmission. It is uncertain who the radio transmission was directed to. Immediately after hearing the garbled radio transmission, dispatch advises that they have received an emergency alert from Engine 1 Portable Radio 3 (firefighter riding behind the officer). You then hear a second radio transmission with what sounds like a vibralert (end of service time indicator (EOSTI) in the background.

17. What action would you take based on the garbled radio transmission and emergency alert activation by one of the Engine 1 firefighters? You attempt to contact the firefighter with the Engine 1 Portable Radio 3 and get no response. Identify who you would communicate with and state the messages and/or tactical orders exactly as you would transmit them.

Listen to the incident audio (Tac4 Fireground Archives, 2024) 1from 10:00 to 25:00 before answering the next several questions. The incident audio has "dead air" removed and as such is not in real time.

18. Based on the radio communications in the incident audio, what challenges did the IC at the Dorman Products incident encounter in resolving this mayday?

19. At 15:40 in the incident audio (Tac4 Fireground Archives), the IC calls to evacuate (withdraw from) the building prior to locating the missing firefighter and a short time later the missing firefighter is located outside on Side Delta. Had the firefighter not exited the building on his own, how might withdrawing companies from the building impacted locating him?

20. At 19:13 in the incident video the IC calls for the FDC to be charged. What are the potential implications of delayed support to the sprinkler system?

21. Companies operating at this incident vented the roof and opened several overhead doors for ventilation prior to establishing fire control. What is the potential impact of increasing ventilation when a sprinkler system is operating

22. The IC tasks a company operating on Side Delta to assist with fire control and they advise that they are stretching a 300' of 3" and 600' of 2 ½" hose to assist with fire control. What are the air management challenges presented by stretching this length of attack line inside the building? What alternatives could be used to get an attack line into operation on the other side of the fire (the big end of the building).

Additional Learning: Read the *Sample Mayday Management SOG 9-2023 (Blue Card, 2023).* How does this SOG compare with your agency's SOG(s) for managing maydays? Review the Blue Card Sample SOG and/or your agency's related SOGs with your crew and discuss how the mayday management procedures in the Blue Card Sample SOG and/or your agency's related SOGs would have impacted resolving the mayday that occurred at the Dorman Products fire.

References

Blue Card. (2023). *Sample Mayday Management SOG 9-2023*. Retrieved May 8, 2025, from https://bit.ly/3RTBcu3.

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