



In-Station Training

TM 25-24a Strip Mall Fire



Author

Chief Ed Hartin

Purpose

Preplan information can frontload the ICs decision making process. Preplanning may be informal response area knowledge, or it may be a formal process with electronic or hard copy documentation.

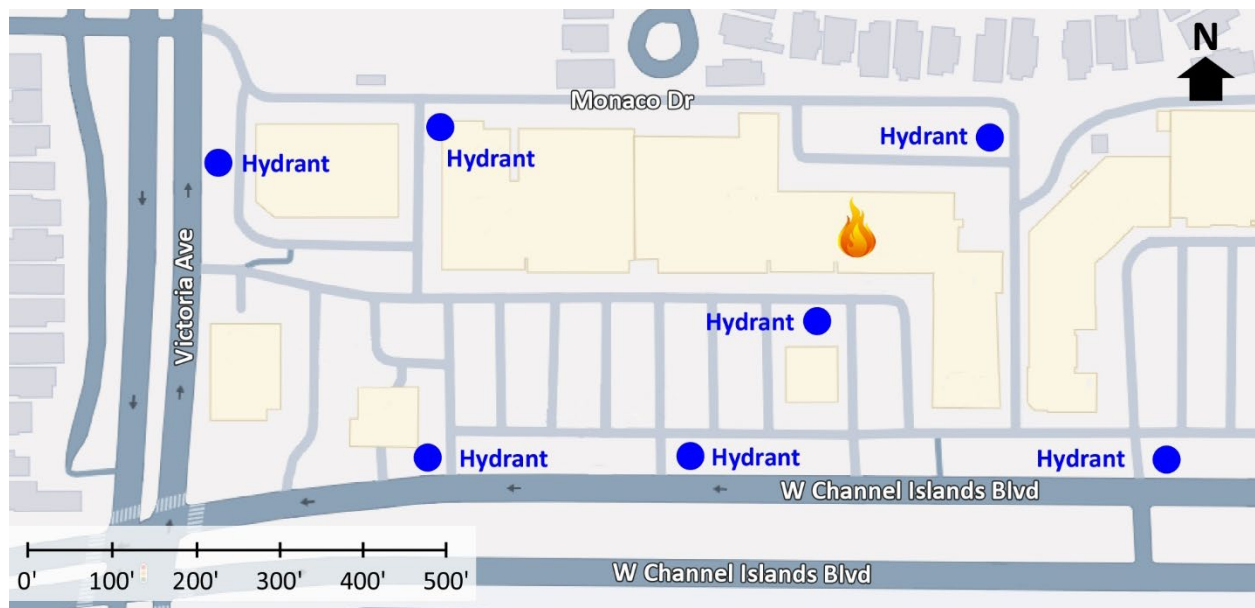
Learning Outcomes

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

Conducting the Drill

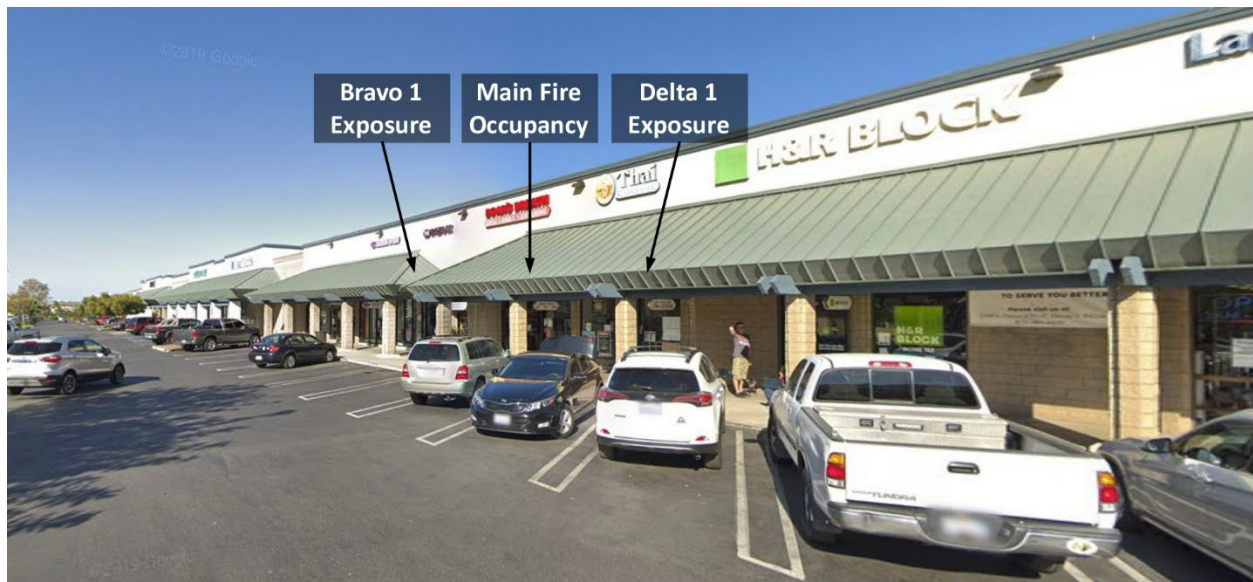
This incident involved a fire at the Pacific Grill restaurant at 719 W Channel Islands Boulevard in Port Hueneme, California on Sunday, March 9, 2025, at 22:16 (Michael M Films, 2025 & Broadcastify, 2025a, 2025b). Review the map and photos (Figures 1-6) to gain an understanding of the building and area involved. Figure 2 also includes preplan data (no sprinklers, fire walls, gas shutoffs, and hydrants).

Figure 1. Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025a). [Map, 719 W Channel Islands Boulevard, Port Hueneme, CA].
<https://bit.ly/4dO6nkx>.

Figure 4. Side Alpha



Note: Adapted from Google. (2018b). [Street view 719 W Channel Islands Boulevard, Port Hueneme, CA]. <https://bit.ly/4dTmdV>.

Figure 5. Side Charlie



Note: Adapted from Google. (2016). [Street view 719 W Channel Islands Boulevard, Port Hueneme, CA]. <https://bit.ly/43ZXwc9>.

Figure 6. 3D Aerial



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025c). [3d aerial view 719 W Channel Islands Boulevard, Port Hueneme, CA]. <https://bit.ly/4dUsg1C>.

The temperature is currently 49° F with no appreciable wind from the north (Weather Underground, 2025). You are the first due command officer. It is Sunday, March 9th, and you are dispatched along with five engines, two ladder companies, a medic unit, and a second command officer¹ to the 700 block of W Channel Islands Boulevard at 22:16 for a commercial fire. The engines and ladders have four-person staffing².



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?

You hear five engines, two ladder companies, an advanced life support ambulance, and another command officer go en route. The first engine will arrive from the west on West Channel Islands

¹ Note that the deployment for a large commercial occupancy is five engines and two ladder companies due to the size of the building and resource requirements for safe and effective tactical operations. Each additional alarm 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).

Boulevard. The second engine and ladder company will arrive from the east four minutes after the first engine. **You will arrive shortly after the second engine and ladder company.** All other units dispatched on the first alarm will arrive after you.

While responding, dispatch provides an update that a caller reports smoke from a strip mall on West Channel Islands Boulevard just east of Victoria Avenue.

Engine 1 arrives and provides the following initial radio report.

On-scene of an extra-large, one-story strip mall with a working fire in a middle unit restaurant, stretching an attack line on Side Alpha for fire control, on a hydrant, offensive strategy, Engine 1 is Island Command.

Island Command provides the following follow-up report:

No 360 due to size, one story on all sides, no basement, preplan shows a firewall on Side Bravo of the main fire occupancy, Side Delta will be the big end, Engine 1 is accountability on Side Charlie.

Ladder 1 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 to the east on West Channel Islands Boulevard. Island Command provides the following tactical assignment:

Position on Side Alpha in front of the Bravo 2 Exposure, go to the roof and provide a roof report.

Engine 2 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on a hydrant on West Channel Boulevard at the east entrance. Island Command provides the following tactical assignment.

Park out of the way, stretch a second line off Engine 1, through Side Alpha into the Bravo 1 and check for extension and primary search.

Watch the [incident video](#) (Michael M Films, 2025) from 00:58 to 01:15 and examine Figure 7 illustrating conditions on your arrival.

Figure 7. Conditions on Arrival



Note: Adapted Michael M Films. (2025). *Firefighters battle large 2nd alarm fire that tears through restaurant in Port Hueneme*. <https://bit.ly/3HvUluD>.

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 conditions, actions, and needs (CAN) report, IC #1 provides the following CAN:

The fire is on Side Charlie, unable to find the seat of the fire, air status 75%, need a company with a second attack line to assist with fire control.

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.

6. Engine 3 arrives and tells you that they are Level 1 on a hydrant, West Channel Islands Boulevard at the middle entrance to the shopping center.

Ladder 1 provides you with the following roof report.

Command, Ladder 1 with Priority Traffic

Fire through the roof on Side Charlie, remainder of the roof is stable, no sagging, normal dead loads, air status 75%, need reassignment.

7. Engine 4 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on West Channel Islands Boulevard at the east entrance to the shopping center.

8. Chief 2 arrives and reports she is Level 1 on West Channel Islands Boulevard.

9. Ladder 2 arrives and reports they are Level 1 on West Channel Islands Boulevard

10. Engine 5 arrives and reports they are Level 1 on West Channel Islands Boulevard at the west entrance to the shopping center.



Reflect on your strategic decision-making and responses to questions one through ten before answering the next six questions. Think about 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?

In this incident the captain of the first arriving engine assumed command and then transferred command to the captain of the second arriving engine as they were making entry for fire attack. The first arriving battalion chief (BC) then assumed command and assigned the captain of the second arriving engine as Attack Group and the captain of the first arriving truck as Roof Division. Command was communicating to the division/group supervisors on one talk group/frequency and the division/group supervisors were talking to the companies they supervised on a second talk group/frequency. As the incident progressed, a 2nd alarm was transmitted (2nd alarm companies remained in staging until late in the incident) and command was transferred to a later arriving BC and the first BC was assigned as Operations. After the first arriving BC was assigned to operations, the third arriving BC was sent to Side Charlie (but not assigned as Charlie Division).

17. What are the potential challenges with repeated transfers of command?

18. How does working with two talk groups/frequencies inside the hazard zone impact communication and situational awareness?

19. What is the most effective operating position for the company officer to supervise their own crew? Where should a division or group supervisor be positioned? How does assigning a company officer as a division or group supervisor impact on their ability to effectively supervise their own crew as well as manage other companies assigned to their division or group?

20. Prior to filling the position of operations section chief, the IC supervised the roof division and attack group. How did assigning a BC to operations change the IC's span-of-control? What organizational alternatives could be used to maximize the effectiveness of tactical supervision of working companies?

Watch the [incident video](#) from 01:30 to 03:00 and examine Figure 8 illustrating conditions on Side Charlie prior to the IC shifting to a defensive strategy.

Figure 8. Conditions on Side Charlie



Note: Adapted Michael M Films. (2025). *Firefighters battle large 2nd alarm fire that tears through restaurant in Port Hueneme*. <https://bit.ly/3HvUluD>.

21. If you were assigned as the supervisor of Division C and saw the conditions illustrated in the incident video and Figure 8, what concerns would you have and what actions would you take?

Additional Learning: [Read Command Function 6-Divisions and Groups](#) (Hartin, 2025) and examine your agency's standard operating guidelines that address incident organization (and the use of divisions and groups).

References

Broadcastify. (2025a). *Ventura County Fire - Ch 1,2,5,8 03/09/2025 10:00 PM <--> 10:30 PM PDT*. Retrieved June 8, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/3HtROXg>.

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