



# In-Station Training

## TM 25-28 Residential Fire



### Author

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### Purpose

What tactics do we use to address fires in attached garages. There is often debate about attack line position and flow rate. Do you have a “default option”, why or why not? What critical factors influence your tactical choices when dealing with this type of fire. Lots to think about here.

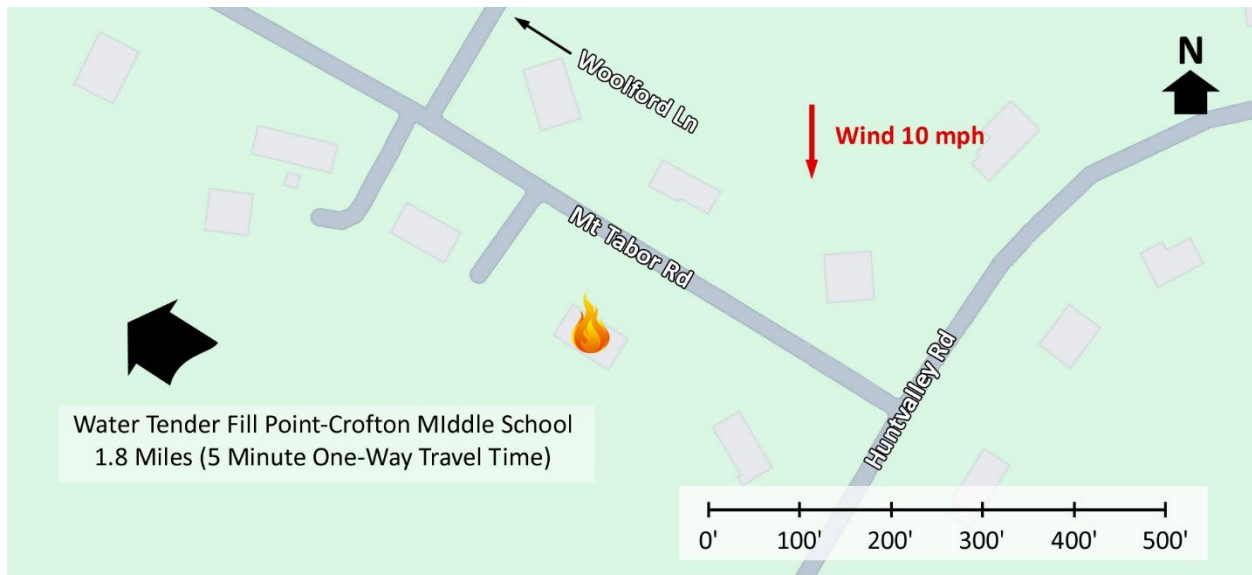
### Learning Outcomes

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 residential fire at 2215 Mount Tabor Road in Gambrills, Maryland on Sunday April 6, 2025, at 18:59 (tall28guy, 2025 & Broadcastify 2025). Review the map and photos (Figures 1-7) to gain an understanding of the building and area involved.

Figure 1. Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025a). [Map, 2215 Mount Tabor Rd, Gambrills, MD]. <https://bit.ly/3FSIkfl>.

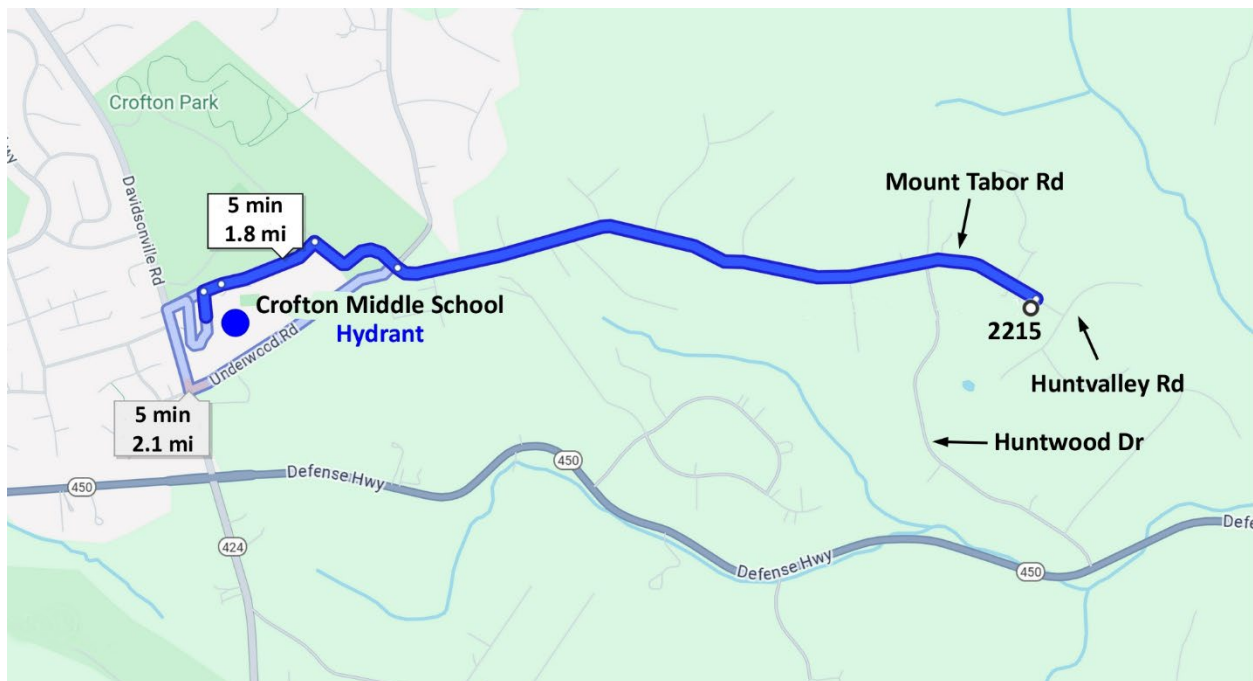
Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025b). [Aerial view 2215 Mount Tabor Rd, Gambrills, MD]. <https://bit.ly/4jOkW8Z>.

There are no hydrants in the immediate area. The closest water tender fill point is a hydrant at Crofton Middle School as illustrated in Figures 1, 3, and 4.

Figure 3. Water Supply Map



Note: Adapted from Google (2025c) [Map with drive time to water tender fill point, 2215 Mount Tabor Rd, Gambrills, MD]. <https://bit.ly/44zizBC>.

Figure 4. Water Tender Fill Point



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025d). [Aerial view Crofton Middle School, 2301 Davidsonville Rd, Gambrills, MD 21054]. <https://bit.ly/3ler1hZ>.

Figure 5. Alpha/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2023a). [Street view 2215 Mount Tabor Rd, Gambrills, MD]. <https://bit.ly/43Nfgrb>.

Figure 6. Side Alpha



*Note:* Adapted from Google. (2023b). [Street view 2215 Mount Tabor Rd, Gambrills, MD].  
<https://bit.ly/3IOaHRH>.

Figure 7. Alpha/Bravo Corner



*Note:* Adapted from Google. (2023c). [Street view 2215 Mount Tabor Rd, Gambrills, MD].  
<https://bit.ly/4nolggT>.

The temperature is currently 56° F with wind from the north at 10 mph (Weather Underground, 2025).

**You are the company officer of an engine company.** It is Sunday April 6<sup>th</sup>, and you have been dispatched along with two other engines, two water tenders, a ladder company, medic unit, and command officer at 18:59 to 2215 Mount Tabor Road for a residential fire with reported entrapment. The engines and

ladder have four-person staffing<sup>1</sup>. The water tenders are cross staffed with the other two engine companies (three personnel on the engine and one on the water tender).



Time starts now! Answer the first nine 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 nine 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, two water tenders, a ladder company, and an advanced life support ambulance go en route. The ladder company will arrive approximately two minutes after you. The second engine and a water tender will arrive from the same direction several minutes after the ladder company. The command officer will arrive shortly after the second engine and water tender. All other units dispatched on the first alarm will arrive after the command officer.

While responding, the dispatcher advises that the caller reports that the garage is on fire, that there is a hospice patient inside the house, and that they are unable to get them out. The caller also reports that there are gas and propane tanks inside the garage.

2. Based on the additional information provided by dispatch, what critical factors would you consider during response? What conversations would you have with your crew during response?

Dispatch now reports that they are now receiving multiple calls reporting a residential fire at 2215 Mount Tabor Road and that the hospice patient has now been removed from the house.

Examine Figures 8 and 9, illustrating conditions on arrival (the incident video begins after the start of tactical operations).

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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 8. Conditions on Approach



*Note: Adapted from tall28guy. (2025). House Fire with attached garage well involved Ann Arundel County, Maryland. <https://bit.ly/4nQKFBd>.*

Figure 9. Conditions on Arrival-Alpha/Bravo Corner



*Note: Adapted from tall28guy. (2025). House Fire with attached garage well involved Ann Arundel County, Maryland. <https://bit.ly/4nQKFBd>.*

3. State your initial radio report (IRR) exactly as you would transmit it to dispatch.
4. 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?

Watch the first 00:20 of the [incident video](#) (tall28guy, 2025) illustrating conditions shortly after arrival. The house has three stories on Side Charlie including a walk out basement which is not involved. Conditions on Side Charlie are consistent with those observed from Side Alpha.

5. Would you change the action you are taking or modify the assignments given to your crew? If so, what task orders would you provide?
6. State your update report exactly as you would transmit it to dispatch.
7. Ladder 1 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on Mount Tabor Road at Huntwood Drive. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.
8. Engine 2 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on Mount Tabor Road at Huntwood Drive with Tender 2. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.
9. 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 nine 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.

10. What was the problem?
11. What was getting in the way of achieving your tactical priorities?
12. Was there anything in this incident that could have hurt or killed you (right now)?
13. Was it reasonable to believe that the Main Fire Occupancy was occupied?
14. Was there searchable space?
15. 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](#) (tall28guy, 2025) from 00:20 to 04:50 and examine Figure 10 before answering the next several questions.

Figure 10. Initial Attack Position



Note: Adapted from Google. (2023c). [Street view 2215 Mount Tabor Rd, Gambrills, MD].

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

Companies operating at this incident stretched the 1<sup>st</sup> line to the area between the well involved garage and the house, the 2<sup>nd</sup> attack line was deployed to back up the first line, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> line was stretched through the main entry door into the house.

16. What are your assumptions regarding the layout and floor plan of this house? Specifically, what part of the house do you think the door that was used as the initial attack position directly accesses?
17. Based on conditions observed from the exterior, do you think the door between the garage and the house was closed or open when the first engine company arrived?
18. In this incident, the first water on the fire was applied from the house into the garage. Was this effective? Why or why not? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this tactic?

19. If it was determined (e.g., during the 360-degree reconnaissance) that the door between the house and the garage was closed, would placement of the first attack line to apply water directly into the garage from Side Bravo have likely been more effective than attacking the fire through the interior door? Why or why not?

**Additional Learning:** There are multiple areas of additional learning with this 10-Minute Training!

While I do not always agree with the perspectives shared on the Search Culture Facebook Page, there are some areas in which I believe they are spot on (e.g., being competent in general, being competent in search operations, not using “wall searches”, knowledge of the layout and arrangement of buildings in your area, etc.). Read the Search Culture post the [Garage Fire Debates](#) (McWilliams, 2025) and discuss the questions raised with your crew. What is your default option (or do you have one) for garage fires like the one in this 10-Minute Training? Why? What critical factors influence your use of the default or cue you to the need to take a different approach?

A second thing to think about is resource deployment. What is your initial assignment for a residential fire? Does this differ if the area you are responding to does not have hydrants? Anne Arundel County’s initial assignment for this non-hydrant box alarm was five engines, three ladder companies, a heavy rescue, a medic unit, two water tenders, safety officer, two battalion chiefs. The working fire assignment included an additional engine and ladder company, emergency medical services officer, rehab unit, the shift commander, and four fire marshals. How does this compare to your agency? Resources are often a critical factor in strategic and tactical decision making? Have a discussion with your crew on how your resource deployment would impact on incident operations at a fire like the one in this 10-Minute Training. Consider the number and type of companies deployed as well as company staffing levels.

It is worth watching the remainder of the [incident video](#) (tall28guy, 2025) to see how water supply was approached at this incident! One water tender was assigned to directly support the attack engine while a supply line was laid from a water tender dump site at Mount Tabor Road and Huntwood Drive. If you have unhydranted areas, discuss the water supply tactics used in this incident with the members of your crew. Were the water supply tactics effective? Where might efficiency have been improved? What would you do differently (note that this may be resource dependent)?

## References

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