



In-Station Training

TM 25-35 Residential Fire



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Purpose

Garages are designed to store motor vehicles, but are often used for general storage, or may even have been converted into living spaces (sometimes with the garage doors left in place). Garage fire tactics may include attacking the fire through the garage (access or overhead door) and stretching attack lines to the interior of the house to confine the fire and protect companies searching for occupants.

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 224 Route 16, Mount Hope, West Virginia on Saturday, May 17, 2025 (Waldo's Trains. (2025) at 10:00. Review the map and photos (Figures 1-4) to gain an understanding of the building and area involved.

Figure 1. Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025a). [Map, 224 Route 16, Mount Hope, WV]. <https://bit.ly/4fOjsLG>.

The closest hydrant is on Main Street at North Fayette Avenue as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025b). [Aerial view 224 Route 16, Mount Hope, WV].
<https://bit.ly/3JpNE3B>.

Figure 3. Side Alpha



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025c). [Street view 224 Route 16, Mount Hope, WV].
<https://bit.ly/45JqLQk>.

Figure 4, Alpha/Bravo Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025d). [Street view 224 Route 16, Mount Hope, WV].

<https://bit.ly/4fKmy3j>.

The temperature is currently 68° F with wind from the southwest at 10 mph with gusts to 20 mph (Weather Underground, 2025). **You are the company officer of an engine company.** It is Saturday, May 17th, and you have been dispatched along with two other engines, two water tenders, a ladder company, medic unit, and command officer to 224 Route 16 at 10:00 for a residential fire. The engines and ladder have four-person staffing¹. 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 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?

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).

You hear a command officer, two other engines, two water tenders, a ladder company, and an advanced life support ambulance go en route. While responding, dispatch provides an update that an electrical line is down in the front yard. Dispatch has notified the electrical utility company.

You will arrive first, approaching from the southwest on Route 16. The ladder company will arrive from the same direction shortly after you. The second engine and water tender will arrive from the southwest on Route 16 several minutes 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.

Watch the first 00:20 of the [incident video](#) (Waldo's Trains, 2025) and examine Figure 5, illustrating conditions on arrival.

Figure 5. Conditions on Arrival



Note: Adapted from Waldo's Trains. (2025) House fire Mount Hope WV. Retrieved August 20, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/41KndvM>.

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 are consistent with those observed from the Alpha/Bravo corner with a large volume of smoke pushing from the building. Bystanders report that they evacuated the sole occupant of the building prior to your arrival.

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.
6. Ladder 1 arrives and advises that they are Level 1 on Route 16 at Virginia 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 Route 16 at Virginia Street along with Water Tender 2. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.
8. Based on observed and 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?

At the time of the incident, there was wind from the southwest (substantially on Side Delta) at 10 mph with gusts to 20 mph (Weather Underground, 2025)

15. How did wind speed and direction influence your incident action plan?

16. What conditions would you anticipate encountering on the interior of the house if you entered through the door on Side Alpha? What building, environment, smoke, heat, and flame (BE-SAHF) indicators lead you to this expectation?

In this incident, bystanders evacuated the sole occupant prior to the arrival of the first engine company. The next several questions pose several hypothetical scenarios. Think about your answers to these two questions with the context of the garage on the upwind side of the house and no significant wind (less than 10 mph) and then with significant wind conditions (greater than 10 mph).

17. If you have a well-involved garage fire with unknown or reported occupants, where would you place the first attack line if your 360-degree reconnaissance indicates that the house is relatively clear of smoke (e.g., door between the garage and the house is closed and intact)? What factors influenced your decision?

18. If you have a well-involved garage fire with unknown or reported occupants, where would you place the first attack line if your 360-degree reconnaissance indicates that the house is smoke logged (e.g., the door between the garage is open or wall between the garage and the rest of the house has been breached and/or the door is open or compromised)? What factors influenced your decision?

19. Would your answers to the preceding two questions change if (like in this incident), you had a report that all occupants had evacuated and were accounted for? Why or why not?

Additional Learning: Modern homes have fire separation consisting of ½" gypsum board on the garage wall next to the house and a 20 minute rated fire door from the garage into the house. If there are rooms above the garage, 5/8" Type X gypsum board is required on the ceiling of the garage. However, this may not be the case in older homes.

Watch [Fighting Garage Fires](#) (LACoFD, 2020) and look at [Attached Garage Fires – Read the Smoke](#) (Wells, 2014). Think about your answers to Questions 17-19 and have a conversation with your crew about attached garage fires and the concepts of standard conditions → standard actions → standard outcomes. What critical factors influence your tactics when dealing with a fire in an attached garage?

References

- Google. (2025a). [Map, 224 Route 16, Mount Hope, WV]. Retrieved August 20, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/4fOjsLG>.
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