



In-Station Training

TM 25-46 Residential Fire



Author

Chief Ed Hartin

Purpose

Conditions presenting from Side Alpha may be quite different than those observed during 360-degree reconnaissance. Identifying the location of the fire, potential avenues of fire spread, and potential for rapid fire development are critical elements of size-up.

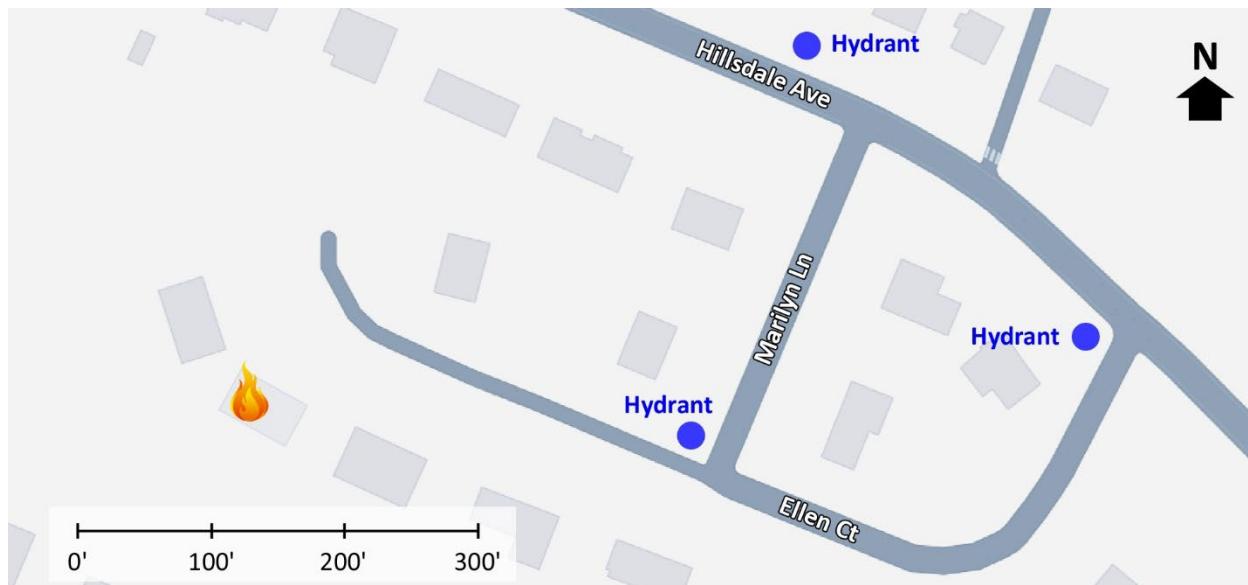
Learning Outcomes

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 29 Ellen Court in Hillsdale, New Jersey on Tuesday, October 21, 2025, at 03:46 (Levine, 2025; Bergen County Prosecutor's Office, 2025; Alexander, 2025; & Broadcastify, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c). 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, 29 Ellen Court, Hillsdale, NJ]. Map data ©2025 Google. <https://bit.ly/4o1fhzm>.

The closest hydrant is at the intersection of Ellen Court and Marilyn Lane, and additional hydrants are in the area as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2025b). [Aerial view 29 Ellen Court, Hillsdale, NJ]. Imagery © Google, Imagery © Airbus Maxar Technologies, Map Data © 2025. <https://bit.ly/43vRJu7>.

Figure 3. Alpha/Bravo Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2018a). [Street view 29 Ellen Court, Hillsdale, NJ]. ©2025 Google. <https://bit.ly/3L3idNv>.

Figure 4. Side Alpha



*Note: Adapted from Google. (2018b). [Street view 29 Ellen Court, Hillsdale, NJ]. ©2025 Google.
<https://bit.ly/3L8DzzF>.*

There are no photos available of Side Charlie. The configuration of the building on Side Charlie in this 10-Minute Training is based on examination of similar buildings in the neighborhood and typical configuration for raised ranch style houses. It is anticipated that there is a ground level sliding glass door in the (lower level) family room and a second sliding glass door accessing a wood deck from the (upper level) dining room.

The temperature is currently 50° F with wind from the west at 7 mph (Weather Underground, 2025). You are the company officer of an engine company. It is Tuesday, October 21st, and you are dispatched for a residential fire at 29 Ellen Court along with two other engines, a ladder company, medic unit, and a command officer at 03:46. 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 these eight questions.

¹ If your first alarm deployment is different, use your own resource assignment and staffing.

1. What critical factors would you consider when dispatched and during response? What conversations would you have with your crew during response?

While responding, you hear the other engines, ladder, medic unit, and command officer go enroute. Dispatch provides an update that this is reported as a “roof fire” and that there may be an occupant still in the house. A subsequent pre-arrival update from dispatch reports that all occupants are out of the house, but there is still a cat inside and that law enforcement reports that the fire involves a rear deck with extension to the roof.

You approach this incident from the east southeast on Ellen Court. You anticipate the ladder company will arrive two minutes after you, followed by the second arriving engine and command officer. Watch the first 00:45 of the [incident simulation video](#) (Hartin, 2025) and examine Figure 5 illustrating conditions on arrival.

Figure 5. Conditions on Arrival



Note: Adapted from Hartin, E. (2025) *10-minute training 25-46 incident simulation* [Fire Studio 7 video]. <https://bit.ly/47oRSCf>. Background image generated by ChatGPT5 based on Google. (2018b). [Street view 29 Ellen Court, Hillsdale, NJ]. ©2025 Google. <https://bit.ly/3L8DzZF>.

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?

The occupants meet you on Side Alpha and confirm that they are all out, but that their cat is still in the house. Conditions on Sides Bravo, Charlie, and Delta are consistent with those observed from Side Alpha. A wooden deck on Side Charlie, Charlie/Delta corner is involved in fire with extension to the eaves. Flames and smoke are also showing from the gable vent on Side Delta.

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 follow up report exactly as you would transmit it to dispatch.
6. Ladder 1 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 at Ellen Court and Marilyn Lane. 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 at Ellen Court and Marilyn Lane. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.
8. Based on 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. Think about 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 exposures were occupied?
13. Was there searchable space?
14. If you believed it was reasonable that the exposures were occupied and there was searchable space, what could you do about it?

The remaining questions are based on actual incident operations as evidenced by radio communications (Broadcastify, 2025b). A chief officer arrived first, providing an initial radio report indicating that this was a working fire and that law enforcement reported a fire on the rear deck extending to the attic. The IC assigned the first arriving engine to forward lay from the hydrant on Ellen Court at Marilyn Lane and to stretch an attack line through the door on Side Alpha. The IC assigned the first arriving ladder company to ladder the building and complete primary search. The IC assigned the second arriving ladder company to assist with primary search. Before the initial attack line was placed into operation, the IC provided an update that there was heavy fire in the rear with extension into Floor 2 and the attic. The second arriving engine was tasked with stretching an attack line off the first arriving engine.

It is important to note that the IC did not report completing 360-degree reconnaissance and if the fire originated on the deck at the level of Floor 1 or Floor 2 (he simply restated the information provided by law enforcement).

Watch the [incident simulation video](#) (Hartin, 2025) from 00:50 to 01:30 before answering the next several questions. Note that conditions illustrated in the simulation video may be somewhat different than encountered by the first arriving resources.

Figure 6. Changing Conditions



Note: Adapted from Hartin, E. (2025) 10-minute training 25-46 incident simulation [Fire Studio 7 video]. <https://bit.ly/47oRSCf>. Background image generated by ChatGPT5 based on Google. (2018b). [Street view 29 Ellen Court, Hillsdale, NJ]. ©2025 Google. <https://bit.ly/3L8DzZF>.

15. With an exterior fire on Side Charlie extending into Floor 2 and the attic, what are the advantages and disadvantages of stretching the initial attack line through the door on Side Alpha?

A short time after the initial attack line was placed into operation through Side Alpha and two ladder companies were committed to primary search, the IC requested EMS “on a rush”, reported “heavy fire showing from the front”, and requested a second alarm. Dispatch advised EMS was on scene and the IC indicated he had “one fireman down” and again requested “EMS on a rush”.

News reports (Levine, 2025 & Alexander, 2025) indicated that there was an interruption in water supply to the attack line, resulting in a flashover. While the IC reported one firefighter down, eleven members were eventually transported for injuries directly or indirectly related to the rapid fire development occurring in this incident. There was no priority traffic radio communication related to the loss of water supply or mayday transmission related to the firefighters impacted by flashover while operating inside the hazard zone.

16. If you were the company officer on the initial attack line operating on Floor 2 after transfer of command to IC #2, and you lost water in your line, what action would you take and what communication would you have with IC #2?

17. As previously noted, there was no Mayday transmitted despite members not being able to safely exit the hazard zone due to fire conditions. Is this a surprise? Given a loss of water supply in the attack line what can firefighters and officers who are operating on the interior of the building do to mitigate the immediate threat presented by the fire?

18. The IC in this incident requested EMS and a second alarm and reported the change in fire conditions. What other actions could the IC take to address the Mayday situation presented by flashover while three companies are operating in the building?

Additional Learning: There are multiple opportunities for additional learning related to the incident in this 10-Minute Training. These include reading the building to identify interior layout and configuration, importance of 360-degree reconnaissance, use of exterior offensive fire control for fires that start on the outside, survival skills to address loss of water supply and rapid fire progression while operating on the interior, and emergency communications including priority traffic, mayday, and emergency traffic communications. Think about how you can incorporate this additional learning over the course of the next month.

Interior Layout and Configuration: What critical information could be obtained from a quick look at the exterior of the house involved in this incident? Can you visualize the likely interior layout or floor plan? For fire control, can you visualize where the first and second attack lines need to be stretched? For search, can you identify the likely location of bedrooms and how best to access them? These are critical questions.

This house is a raised ranch. A raised ranch has two levels, a main living area on the upper floor and commonly a garage and finished basement on the lower level. See [Ranch Style House Plan 94009](#) (Cool House Plans, 2025) for an example. Both levels are accessed by a short flight of stairs just inside the main entrance to the house on Side Alpha. There is usually a door on Side Charlie leading to either the lower or upper level and in some cases, there are doors to both levels. This depends on slope and configuration of exterior decks. In a raised ranch, the bedrooms are commonly located on the upper level but consider the possibility that bedrooms may also be located on the lower level.

A raised ranch is different than a split level house in that a split level has three or more levels with different living zones (e.g., family room on one level, kitchen and dining room on another, and bedrooms on yet another. In this type of house, the levels are separated by short flights of stairs that may be in different locations.

Take advantage of response to other types of incidents to pay attention to layout and configuration. Identify commonalities in floor plans and discuss the tactical implications with your crew.

360-Degree Reconnaissance and Outside Fires: Time and time again, near miss, serious injury and line of duty death incidents reinforce the importance of 360-degree reconnaissance using both your naked eyes and a thermal imager to identify critical factors before making entry under fire conditions. This is not always possible, but when not, this should be communicated and addressed by the IC as soon as possible during incident operations.

On May 25, 2008, seven members of Loudoun County Fire and Rescue were injured, four receiving significant burn injuries during operations at a house fire just outside of Leesburg, Virginia. See [Significant Injury Investigative Report 43238 Meadowood Court May 25, 2008](#) (LCFR, 2008) for a detailed examination of this incident.

Watch [Meadowood Video](#) (LCFR, 2017) with your crew and discuss the similarities and differences between the incident in this 10-Minute Training and the Meadowood Court incident.



What are your “immediate action drills” (IAD) for loss of water in your attack line? Go out on the drill ground and practice these IADs. Work on reaction (withdrawal or taking refuge behind a closed door) and mayday communications.

Recognize that with rapid fire progression maydays, you will likely not be able to communicate until you reach a safer area such as a place of refuge, the floor below the fire.

Review Command Competence Training Bulletins 25-01 and 25-02 for additional information on mayday communications.

Outside Fires and Initial Attack Position Research conducted by UL FSRI has identified that when a fire starts on the outside, the initial attack position should be on the exterior to control the source of the fire (Kerber & Zevotek, 2014). In research on the coordination of suppression and ventilation in single-family homes (Regan, Bryant, & Weinschenk, 2020), UL FSRI examined multiple options for coordinated use of exterior water application with rapid transition to the interior and ventilation.

If you have not already done so, complete the on-line course [Coordination of Suppression and Ventilation in Single-Family Homes](#). (UL FSRI, 2022).

References

Alexander, D. (2025). 'Mayday!' *Hillsdale firefighters injured fleeing raging house fire*. Retrieved November 3, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/4qXyq7t>.

Bergen County Prosecutor's Office. (2025). *Hillsdale fire investigation*. Retrieved November 3, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/4qGoHC4>.

Broadcastify. (2025a). *Battalion 7 Fire Response 10/21/2025 03:36 AM <-> 04:06 AM EDT*. Retrieved November 3, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/4qGODNV>.

Broadcastify. (2025b). *Battalion 7 Fire Response 10/21/2025 04:06 AM <-> 04:36 AM EDT*. Retrieved November 3, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/47llQab>.

Broadcastify. (2025c). Hillsdale VAC 10/21/2025 03:21 AM <-> 03:51 AM EST. Retrieved November 3, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/4hOHCa0>.

Cool House Plans. (2025). *Ranch style house plan 94009*. Retrieved November 3, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/3LFZzva>.

Google. (2018a). [Street view 29 Ellen Court, Hillsdale, NJ]. ©2025 Google. Retrieved November 4, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/3L3idNv>.

Google. (2018b). [Street view 29 Ellen Court, Hillsdale, NJ]. ©2025 Google. Retrieved November 4, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/3L8DzZF>.

Google. (2025a). [Map, 29 Ellen Court, Hillsdale, NJ]. Map data ©2025 Google. Retrieved November 4, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/4o1fhzm>.

Google. (2025b). [Aerial view 29 Ellen Court, Hillsdale, NJ]. Imagery © Google, Imagery © Airbus Maxar Technologies, Map Data © 2025. Retrieved November 4, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/43vRJu7>.

Hartin, E. (2025) *10-minute training 25-46 incident simulation* [Fire Studio 7 video]. Retrieved November 4, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/47oRSCf>.

Hartin, E. (2025b). *Training bulletin 25-01 calling the mayday*. Retrieved November 4, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/4qyvbmU>.

Hartin, E. (2025c). *Training bulletin 25-02 calling the mayday*. Retrieved November 4, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/47oUXIO>.

Kerber, S. & Zevotek, R. (2014). *Study of residential attic fire mitigation tactics and exterior fire spread hazards on fire fighter safety*. Retrieved November 4, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/49AKmFH>.

Levine, C. (2025). *Hillsdale fire: firefighters injured in Ellen Court blaze*. Retrieved November 3, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/3Wxrcce>.

Loudoun County Fire and Rescue (LCFR). (2008). *Significant injury investigative report 43238 Meadowood Court May 25, 2008*. Retrieved November 4, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/47p26Tc>.

Loudoun County Fire and Rescue (LCFR). (2017). *Meadowood video*. Retrieved November 4, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/49Gsg54>.

Underwriters Laboratories Fire Safety Research Institute (UL FSRI). (2022). *Coordination of suppression and ventilation in single-family homes*. Retrieved November 4, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/3JCau8w>.

Weather Underground (2025). *Teterboro, NJ weather history* [historical weather October 21, 2025]. Retrieved November 3, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/47Cai1g>.