In-Station Training

TM 26-08 Commercial Fire

Author

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Purpose

This 10-Minute Training is a bit different than usual. It is set in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia and resources and water supply are based on the actual Fire Rescue New South Wales incident.

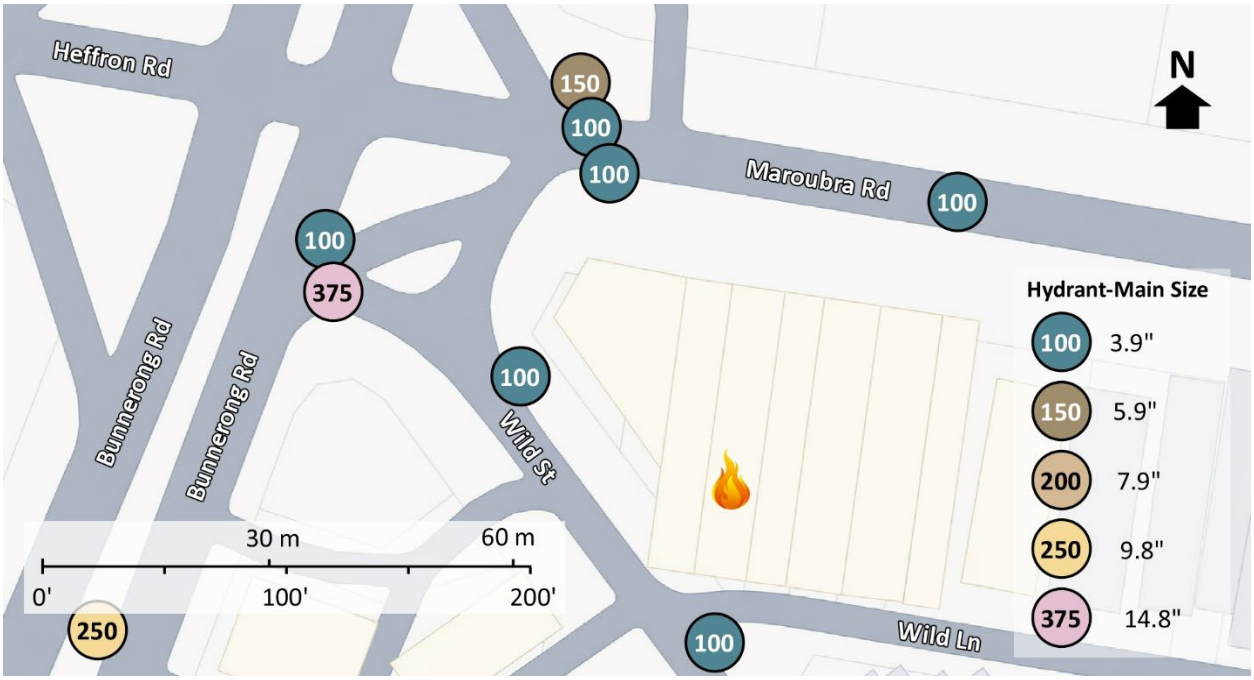
Learning Outcomes

Initial incident commanders perform an effective size-up, select an appropriate strategy, and implement tactics based on the strategic decision-making model.

Conducting the Drill

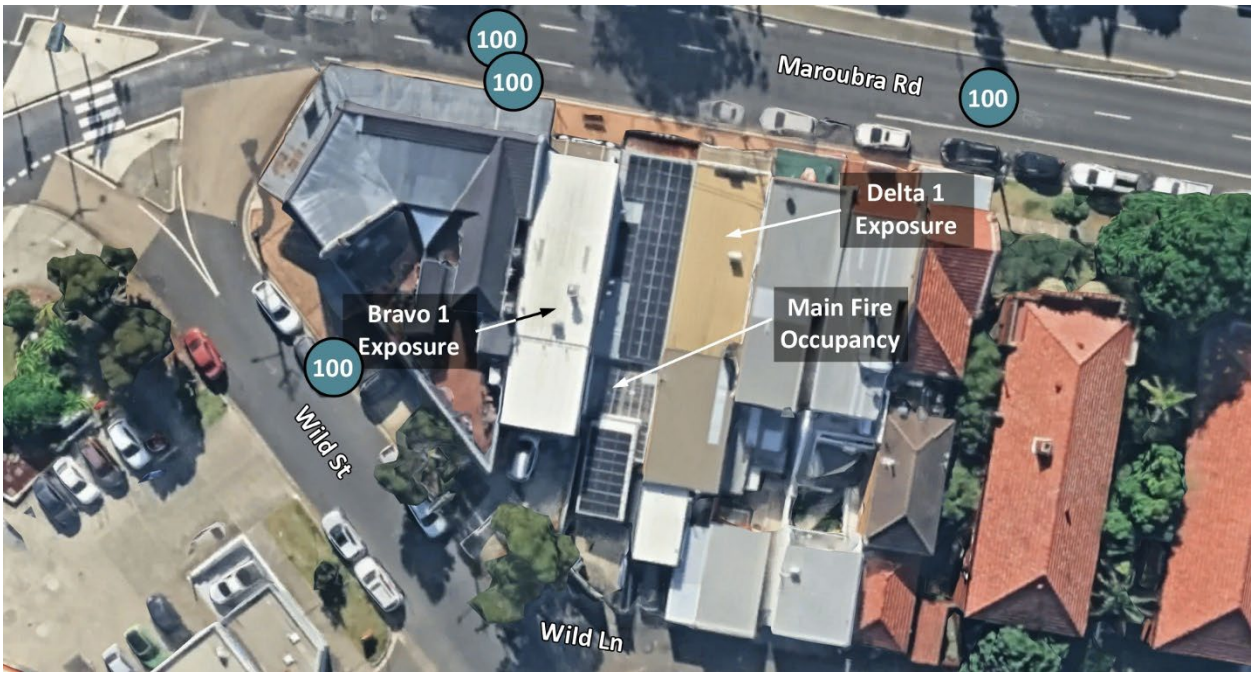
This incident involved a commercial fire at the Foam Laundromat, 11 Maroubra Rd, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia on Thursday, September 25, 2025, at 20:55 (Emergency NSW, 2025 & 9 News Sydney, 2025). Review the map and photos (Figures 1-6) to gain an understanding of the buildings and area involved.

Figure 1. Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2026a). [Map, 11 Maroubra Rd, Sydney, NSW, Australia]. Map data ©2026 Google. https://bit.ly/4ayd0r4.

Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2026b). [Aerial view 11 Maroubra Rd, Sydney, NSW, Australia]. Imagery © Google, Imagery © Airbus Maxar Technologies, Map Data © 2026. https://bit.ly/4tEcobd.

There are numerous hydrants in the area as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 (hydrant icons show the water main size in mm). Hydrants in Sydney are located under the surface sidewalk or the street and have a hinged cover marked with an H. Firefighters access the hydrant by opening the cover and inserting a riser (aka standpipe). A typical hydrant and riser used by Fire Rescue New South Wales are illustrated in Figure 3. When making hydrant connections, firefighters will typically attach a gated wye to the riser permitting two 64 mm[1] (2 ½") supply lines to be attached to the hydrant.

The flow rates available from these hydrants vary considerably depending on water main size and pressure. Typical average flow rate from a hydrant located on a 100 mm-150 mm diameter water main is approximately 1000 lpm (260 gpm). The flow from a hydrant located on a 375 mm water main may exceed 5700 lpm (1500 gpm). The static pressure in this area of the city is approximately 550 kPa (51 psi).

[1] Fire Rescue New South Wales refers to these hoselines as 70 mm based on their outside diameter.

Figure 3. Fire Hydrant and Riser

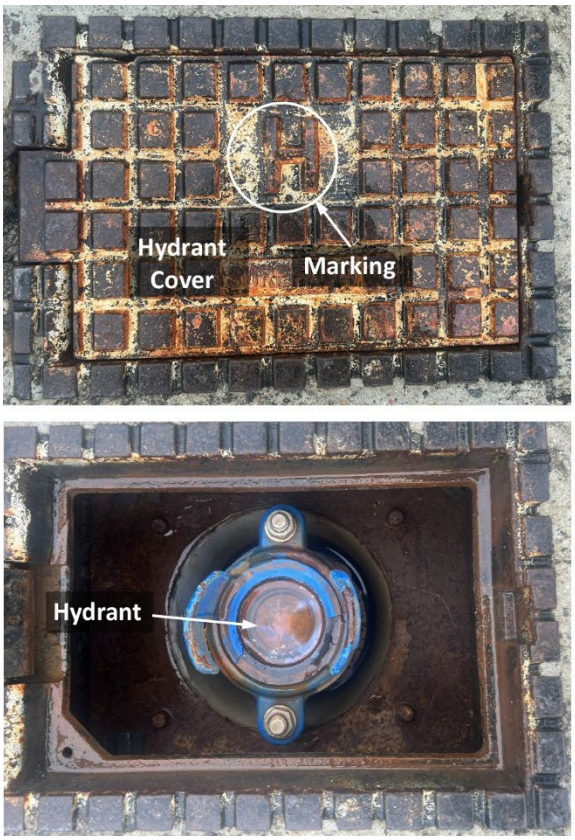


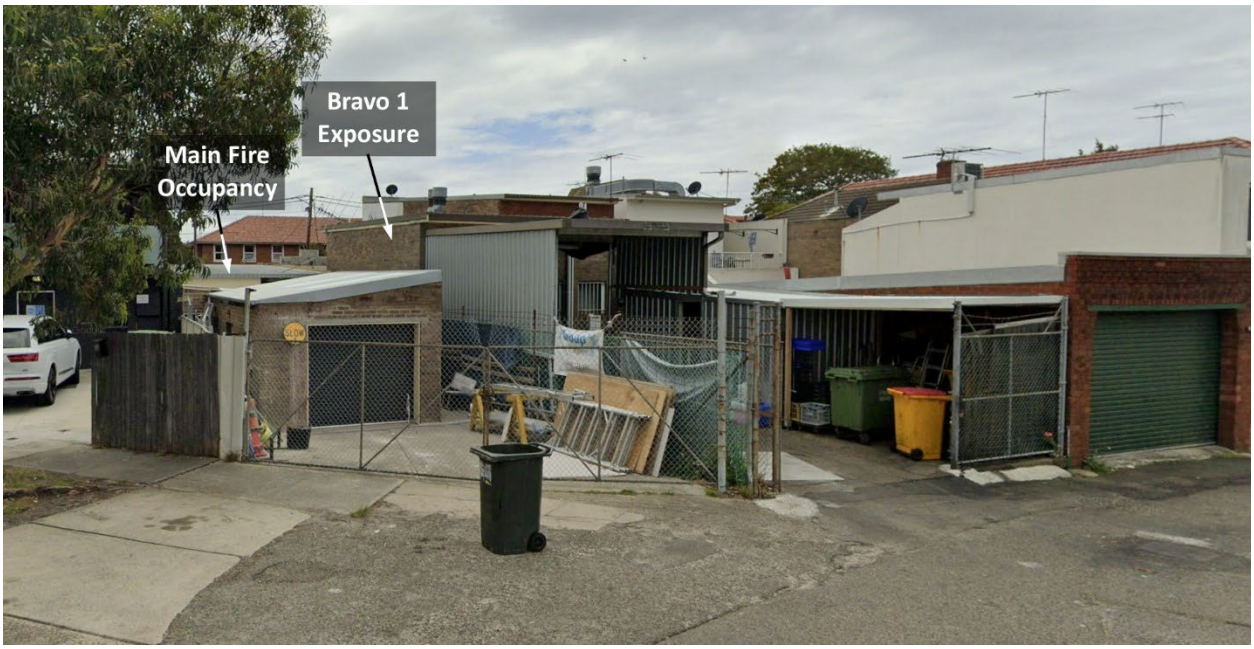
Figure 4. Side Alpha

Note: Adapted from Google. (2023). [Street view 11 Maroubra Rd, Sydney, NSW, Australia]. ©2025 Google. https://bit.ly/45UE7df.

Figure 5. Charlie/Delta Corner

Note: Adapted from Google. (2022a). [Street view 11 Maroubra Rd, Sydney, NSW, Australia]. ©2025 Google. https://bit.ly/4kr6Axd.

Figure 6. Side Charlie



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022b). [Street view 11 Maroubra Rd, Sydney, NSW, Australia]. ©2025 Google. https://bit.ly/4qmISnk.

The area of the incident is an inner suburb of Sydney. The buildings in this neighborhood have diverse construction types, timber and brick, concrete, wood, and steel framing. Occupancies include a mix of separate houses, semi-detached homes and medium to higher density apartments with commercial occupancies along major arteries. Many buildings were built in the early 1900s with infill constructed more recently. Approximately 56% of the homes in this neighborhood are owner-occupied. Approximately 46% of the residents in this area speak a language other than English at home (e.g., Greek, Mandarin, Cantonese, Portuguese, and French. (Open AI, 2026). The frequency of fire incidents in this area is typical of other inner suburban neighborhoods in the city.

Please review Table 1 outlining the New South Wales structure fire response plan for structure fires. Engines (Pumps) are staffed with a station officer (SO) and three firefighters (FF). Other resource types are typically staffed by firefighters. Duty commanders are equivalent to the United States fire service rank of battalion chief and superintendents are equivalent to the rank of Deputy Chief.

Table 1. Fire Rescue New South Wales Structure Fire Response Plan[2]

1st Alarm	2nd Alarm	3rd Alarm	4th Alarm
2 Pumps (SO+3)	2 Pumps (SO+3 FF) 1 Pump (SO+3 FF) RIT 1 Aerial (2 FF) 1 Duty Commander	2 Pumps (SO+3) 1 Rescue (2 FF) 1 Hazmat (2 FF) 1 Logistics Vehicle (2 FF) 1 Duty Commander	2 Pumps (SO+3) 1 Aerial (2 FF) 1 Hazmat (2 FF) 1 Duty Commander 1 Command Van 2 Superintendents

Fire Rescue New South Wales engines carry 2000 L (528 gallons) of water and have 4000 lpm (1056 gpm) pumps. Attack line options are 17 mm high pressure hose reel lines, 38 mm (1 ½") attack lines and 64 mm lines that are typically used as supply lines but can be used as large attack lines or to supply master stream devices. Fire Rescue New South Wales does not have ladder companies in the same sense as the US fire service, their aerials are used to provide rescue, elevated access, or for aerial master streams.

The temperature is currently 69° F with no appreciable wind from the north. (Weather Underground, 2026). **You are the officer of Engine 1, the first arriving engine company**. It is 20:55 on Thursday, September 25th and you are dispatched to a commercial fire at 11 Maroubra Road along with one other engine. The engines have four-person staffing[3].

[2] The FRNSW response plan in Table 1 shows the additional units added for each alarm.

[3] If your first alarm deployment is different, you can use your own resource assignment and staffing, but it might be interesting to work this tactical decision game with Fire Rescue New South Wales deployment and staffing.

Time starts now! Answer the first nine questions within the next 10 minutes. Save discussion for after answering these questions.

While responding, you hear the other engine go enroute and dispatch provides an update that they are receiving multiple calls reporting flames from the laundromat. Travel time from your station to the incident is approximately 3 minutes and you will arrive from the east on Maroubra Road.

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

2. Would you request additional resources prior to arrival, why or why not? If you would, what additional resources would you request?

Important! Answer questions two through nine in the form of communication you would have with your crew, dispatch, other companies, and the first arriving command officer. State the communications exactly as you would say them face-to-face or over the radio. Save explanation or discussion until after you have completed these questions.

You anticipate the second engine will arrive several minutes after you are on scene. Examine Figure 7 illustrating conditions on arrival (the incident video begins after the start of tactical operations).

Figure 7. Conditions on Arrival

Note: Adapted from Emergency NSW. (2025). *Early arrival – 3rd alarm structure fire | Maroubra, Sydney* [video]. https://bit.ly/3MoaTwG.

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?

No smoke is visible inside Exposures Bravo 1 or Delta 1. If you perform 360-degree reconnaissance, 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 follow up report exactly as you would transmit it to dispatch.

7. Engine 2 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on Maroubra Road at Wild Street. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.

8. Engine 3 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on Maroubra Road at Bunnerong Road. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.

9. 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 nine before answering the next six questions. Think about what cues, patterns, or anomalies (differences from conditions that you would anticipate) informed your answers.

10. What was the problem?

11. What were your tactical priorities and what was getting in the way of achieving them?

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 there was searchable space, what could you do about it?

Watch the incident video (Emergency NSW, 2025) from 00:15 to 02:20 illustrating actual incident conditions before answering the next several questions. This video begins with operations being conducted on Side Charlie (Wild Lane) and then progresses to Side Alpha (Maroubra Road).

16. The initial incident commander in this incident implemented a defensive strategy. Was this consistent with your incident action plan? What factors influenced your strategic choice?

17. Did you identify a need for primary search and checking for extension in the adjacent occupancies? If so, what critical factors influenced identification of this need and what action did you take to address it (e.g., tactical assignment or needs stated in transfer of command)?

Additional Learning: The first command function is deployment (Brunacini, 2002). Deployment includes the response package (number, kind, type, and staffing of fire apparatus) and the system through which those resources are put to work on the fireground (e.g., staging and critical factors-based assignments by the IC versus standard operating procedures driven assignments that are implemented by fire companies on arrival at the incident).

In many cases, standard response packages for a given type of incident (e.g., residential fire, commercial fire, high hazard occupancy, high-rise) are determined based on analysis of critical tasks that is part of developing a standard of coverage for a community. Some fire and rescue agencies dispatch different response packages to structure fires based on building and occupancy characteristics and others use a standard response package for most, if not all types of structure fires. In either case, the IC must evaluate if the resources dispatched are adequate based on the critical factors presented by the incident. As noted in this 10-Minute Training, there are significant differences between the deployment models used by fire departments in Australia and the United States.

In the United States many urban fire and rescue agencies use National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 (2020a) as an element in establishing response packages as part of a standard of coverage. Predominantly volunteer staffed fire and rescue agencies in rural areas often use NFPA 1720 (2020b) as a similar baseline in establishing response packages as part of their standard of coverage. NFPA 1710 provides detailed guidance on turnout and response times as well as company staffing levels and the total number of personnel necessary for specific occupancy types. For example, 16-17 personnel for typical 2000 ft^2 (186 m^2) two-story, single-family houses and 27-28 personnel for garden style apartments or strip mall occupancies.

In Australia, dispatch of two engines to structure fires is a common baseline. This is based on a standard of having a minimum of seven personnel on the fireground.

> The "seven on the fireground" standard originates from a 1998 United Kingdom Home Office Report that reviewed fire services' standards of fire cover and systems of work. In the 1998 Report, a minimum of seven firefighters on the fireground is required to satisfy safe systems of work. This number increases to a minimum of nine firefighters in the event of 'persons reported' in a structure fire (ie. persons trapped). This number ensures effective fireground operations and, most importantly, ensures firefighter safety (UFU, 2021, p. 8).

Take a few minutes and work through a critical task analysis for the incident presented in this 10-Minute Training.

Critical Task	Staffing Required
Command & Tactical Supervision	
Fire Control	
Water Supply	
Search	
Ventilation	
Other Support Functions	
Total Staffing Required	

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