In-Station Training

TM 26-08a Commercial Fire

Author

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Purpose

This 10-Minute Training for IC #2 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.

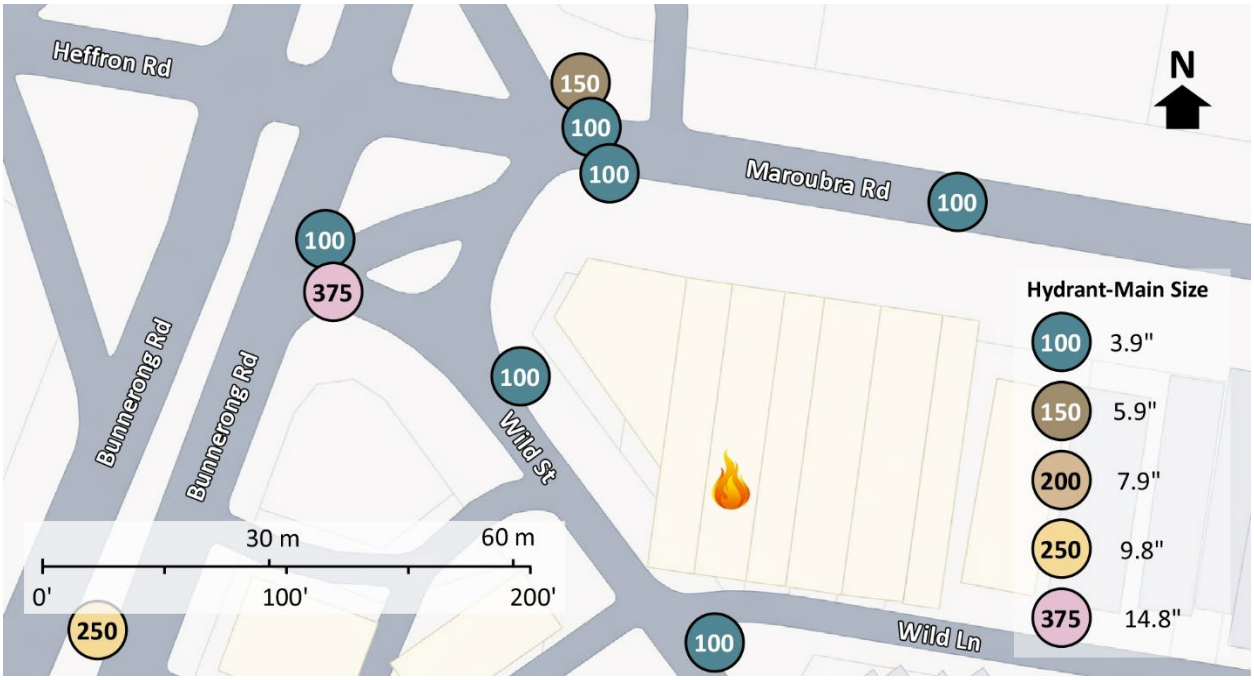
Learning Outcomes

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 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

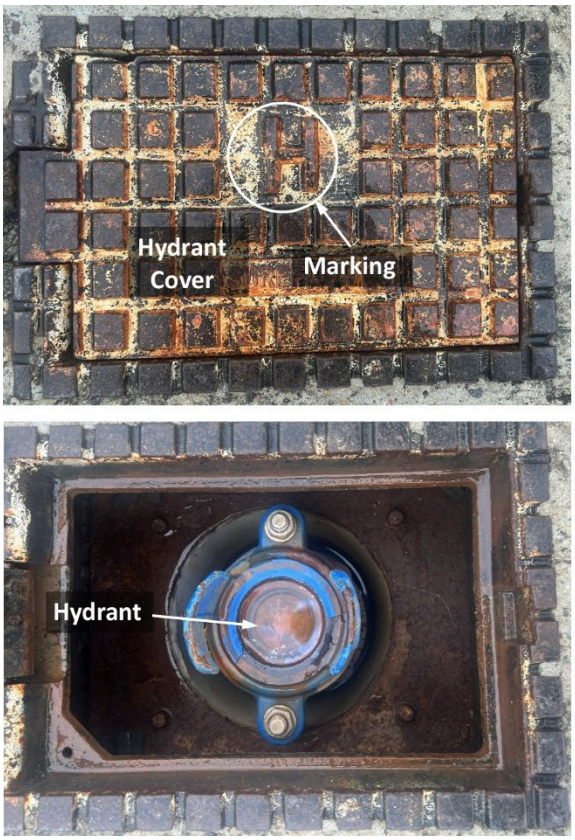


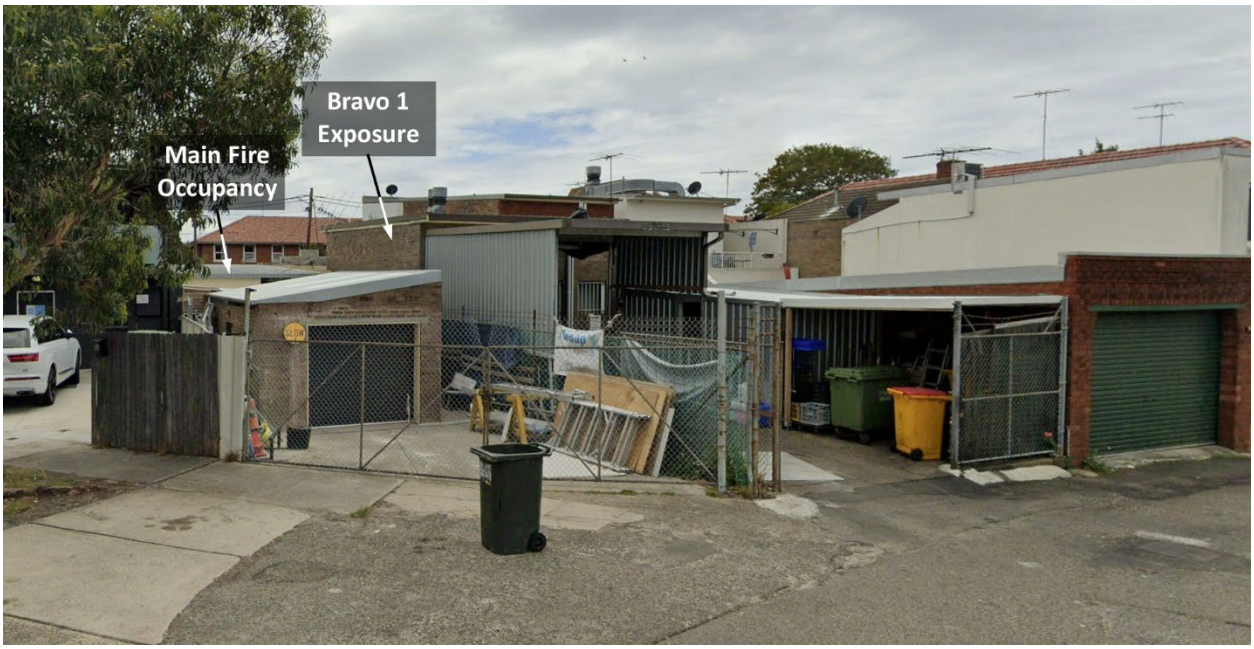
Figure 4. Side Alpha

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)	2 Pumps (SO+3)	2 Pumps (SO+3)
	1 Pump (SO+3 FF) RIT	1 Rescue (2 FF)	1 Aerial (2 FF)
	1 Aerial (2 FF)	1 Hazmat (2 FF)	1 Hazmat (2 FF)
	1 Duty Commander	1 Logistics Vehicle (2 FF)	1 Duty Commander
		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 duty commander**. It is 20:55 on Thursday, September 25th and you hear Engine 1 and Engine 2 dispatched to a commercial fire at 11 Maroubra Road. 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.

While these companies are responding, dispatch provides an update that they are receiving multiple calls reporting flames from the laundromat and the officer on the first due engine orders a second alarm and you are dispatched to the incident along with three additional engines and an aerial platform.

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

While you are responding, you hear Engine 3, Engine 4, Platform 4, and Engine 5 go enroute.

1. What critical factors would you consider when dispatched and during response?

Engine 1 arrives and provides the following initial radio report.

> *On-scene, small one-story commercial, middle of row, working fire with smoke and flames from the roof, stretching an attack line on Side Alpha for fire control, on a hydrant, offensive strategy, give me a 3rd alarm with Level 2 Staging one block west on Heffron Road, Engine 1 is Maroubra Command.*

57th *Command* provides the following follow-up report:

> *No 360 due to size, the fire appears to be in the rear of the laundromat towards Side Charlie. Bravo 1 is a one-story commercial and Delta 1 is a two-story commercial.*

Engine 2 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on Maroubra Road at Wild Street. Maroubra Command provides the following tactical assignment:

> *Position on Side Charlie, establish a water supply and stretch an attack line on Side Charlie for fire control.*

Engine 3 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on Maroubra Road at Bunnerong Road. Maroubra Command provides the following tactical assignment:

> *Park out of the way and stretch a second attack line off Engine 1 on Side Alpha for fire control.*

You approach this incident from the north on Bunnerong Road and anticipate that you will arrive shortly before the fourth engine and aerial platform.

2. What actions will you take prior to contacting IC #1 (Engine 1) to begin command transfer?

Important! Answer questions three through nine in the form of communication you would have with dispatch and the companies operating at this incident. State the communications exactly as you would say them over the radio. Save explanation or discussion until after you have completed these questions.

Watch the incident video (Emergency NSW, 2025) from 03:01 to 03:46 and examine Figure 7 illustrating conditions on your arrival. Click the link above or scan the QR code to access the video.

Figure 7. Conditions on Arrival

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

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, Engine 2, and Engine 3 and request for a conditions, actions, and needs (CAN) report, IC #1 provides the following CAN:

> *Fire conditions are worsening with fire through the roof on Side Alpha, Engines 1 and 2 are applying water with limited effect. Need to shift to a defensive strategy.*

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 dispatch and/or operating companies exactly as you would transmit them.

Dispatch advises that your 3rd alarm resources are Engines 6 and 7, Rescue 6, Hazmat 7, Logistics 3, and Chief 2

6. Engine 4 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on Heffron Road at at Bunnerong Road. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.

7. Platform 4 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on Heffron Road at Bunnerong Road. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.

8. Engine 5 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on Heffron Road at Bunnerong Road. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.

9. Engine 6 reports that they, Engine 7, and Chief 2, are in Level 2 Staging on Heffron Road. State the tactical assignment you would give the resources in Level 2 Staging exactly as you would transmit them.

10. Based on the resources available in Level 2 Staging (after making assignments for Engines 5 and 6 and Chief 2), would you change your resource determination (e.g., special call additional resources or order an additional alarm)? If so, state the communication that you would have with dispatch to revise your resource determination exactly as you would transmit it.

Reflect on your strategic decision-making and responses to questions one through nine before answering the next six questions. Think about what differences from conditions that you would anticipate (cues, patterns, or anomalies) 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, the Bravo 1 and/or the Delta 1 Exposures were occupied?

15. Was there searchable space in the Main Fire Occupancy? Was there searchable space in the Bravo 1 and/or the Delta 1 Exposures?

16. If you believed it was reasonable that any of these occupancies were occupied and there was searchable space, what could you do about it?

Watch the incident video (Emergency NSW. (2025) from 03:01 to 11:00 illustrating actual incident conditions before answering the next several questions.

17. How did you address the need to shift to a defensive strategy identified in IC #1's CAN report?

18. Did you identify a need to search and check for fire extension in the Bravo 1 and Delta 1 exposures? If so, which exposure was your highest priority and how did you address this need? What critical factors influenced your decision making?

The IC at this incident increased the resource determination to a 4th alarm, adding two additional engines, an additional aerial platform, a hazmat unit, duty commander, command can and two superintendents. The second aerial platform was positioned on Side Charlie (Wild Street at Wild Lane) and deployed for elevated master stream operations. Watch the incident video (Garden, 2025) illustrating elevated master stream operations before answering the final question.

19. What would be necessary for aerial platforms working on Sides Alpha and Charlie to be effective in application of exterior water from their elevated master streams?

20. As IC #2, how would you approach incident organization of this incident to provide effective supervision of companies operating on Side Alpha, Side Charlie, and any operations conducted in the Bravo 1 and Delta 1 Exposures?

Additional Learning: Think about how the deployment model used by Fire Rescue New South Wales compares to the deployment model used by your agency. What is similar and what is different? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? What did you learn from working on this tactical decision game using the Fire Rescue New South Wales deployment model and water supply? How can you apply what you learned in your own context?

Review the general process for establishing a division and the responsibilities for tactical supervision and embedded safety (Hartin, 2023). If the division supervisor is working alone, their span of control is limited to three or four companies. Reinforcing the division supervisor with a division safety officer increases the division's span of control and the quality of tactical supervision and safety oversight. The following general sequence is used when establishing a division:

1. Division supervisor assigned and the IC identifies the resources assigned to the division (e.g., you are Division Alpha and have Engine 1, Engine 3, Engine 4, and Platform 4).,
2. Division picks up passports from accountability location(s).
3. Division advises when in place and assuming the division.

4. Companies in the division notified that they work for the division and CAN reports requested.
5. Division supervisor obtains CAN reports from companies assigned to the division..
6. Division safety officer assigned (2nd command officer or other overhead).

A division has two sets of responsibilities, one for tactical supervision and the other for embedded safety as outlined in Table 1. If the division supervisor is working alone (no division safety assinged) they are responsible for both tactical supervision and embedded safety functions.

Table 2. Division Responsibilities

Tactical Supervision	Embedded Safety
• Division IAP matches IC's Plan • Division risk management (positions match conditions) • Entry control • Manage resources & complete tactical priorities	• Accountability • Air management • Rotation of companies • On-deck companies • Recycling • Sending companies to rehab

The division supervisor & division safety are a team. The division safety officer works with and for the division supervisor. Remember that it doesn't matter what agency you work for and leave your rank in the fire SUV.

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