



# In-Station Training

## TM 26-12 Residential Fire



### Author

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### Purpose

Complex road layouts and addressing or building numbering can impact fireground operations. This challenge is common in apartment complexes, but can also be an issue in residential neighborhoods.

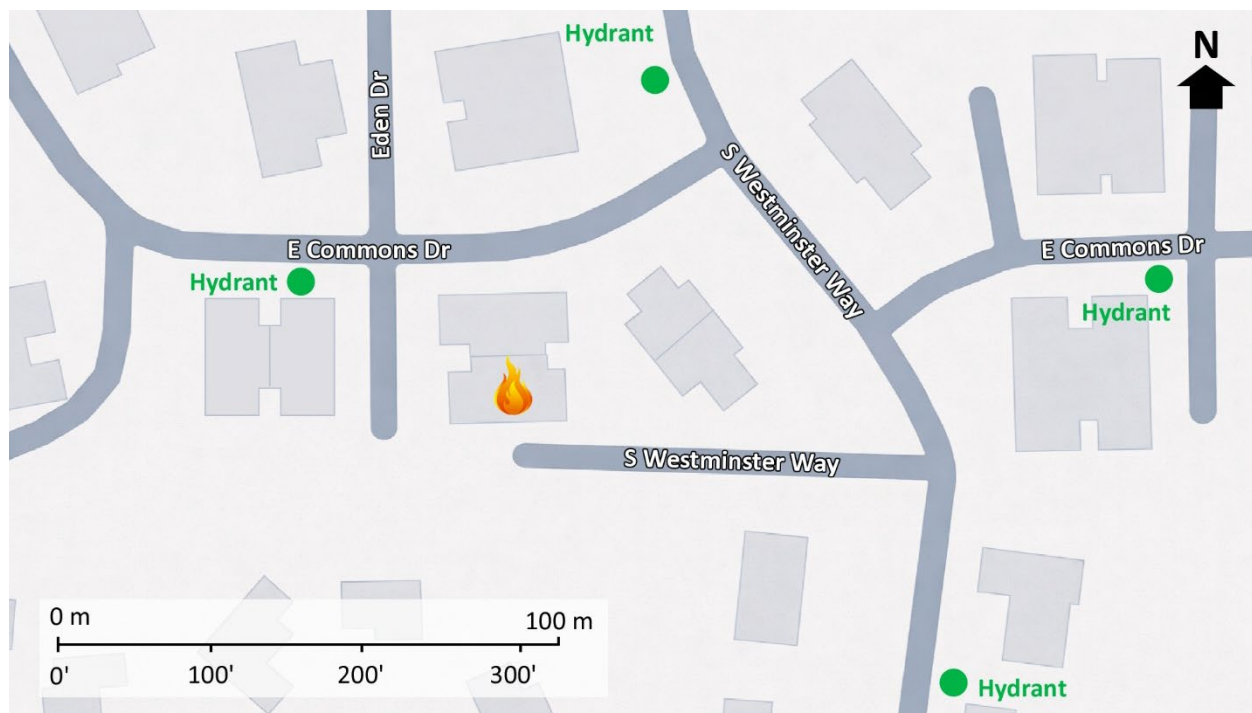
### Learning Outcomes

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 residential fire at 3436 S Westminster Way in Bloomington, Indiana on Monday, March 2, 2026, at 11:58 (FireRescueVideos, 2026, Hogan, 2026). Review the map and photos (Figures 1-7) to gain an understanding of the building and area involved.

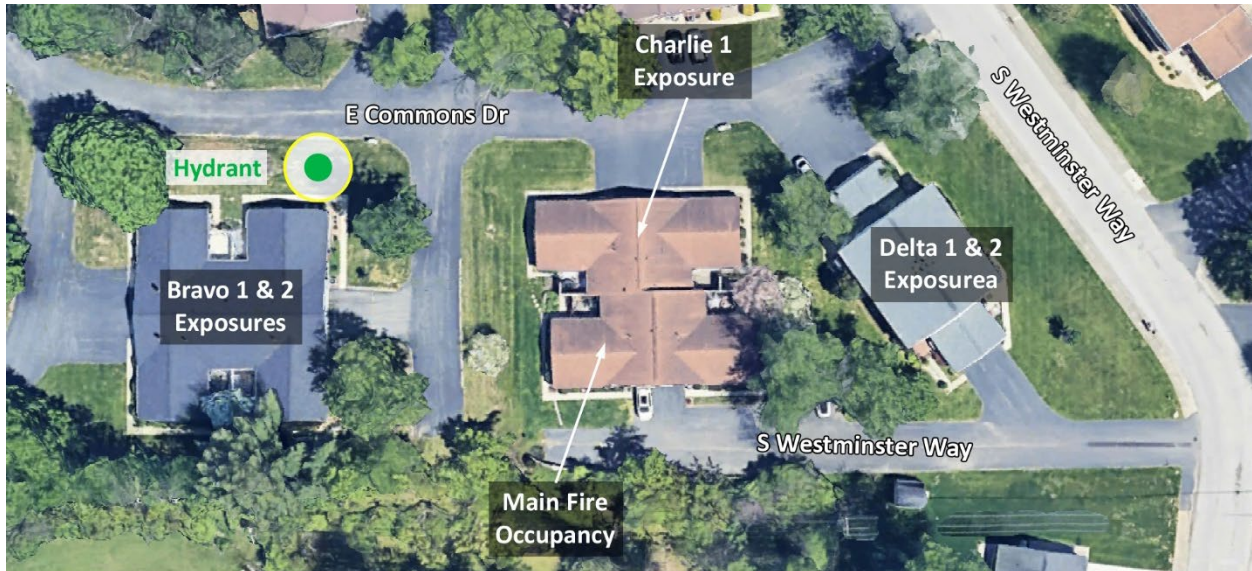
Figure 1. Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2026a). [Map, 3436 S Westminister Way, Bloomington, IN]. Map data ©2026 Google. <https://bit.ly/40K9OCX>.

The closest hydrant is at the corner of East Commons Drive and South Eden Drive. There are additional hydrants in the area as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2026b). [Aerial view 3436 S Westminster Way, Bloomington, IN]. Imagery © Google, Imagery © Airbus Maxar Technologies, Map Data © 2026. <https://bit.ly/3NvaYzl>.

**Important!** Geographic designations shown in Figures 2-7 are based on the reported location on South Westminster Way. You may choose to change these designations after arrival and reconnaissance.

Figure 3. Alpha/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2023a). [Street view 3436 S Westminster Way, Bloomington, IN]. ©2026 Google. <https://bit.ly/4rkkeEh>.

Figure 4. Side Alpha



Note: Adapted from Google. (2023b). [Street view 3436 S Westminster Way, Bloomington, IN]. ©2026 Google. <https://bit.ly/4lpHM9w>.

Figure 5. Side Charlie



Note: Adapted from Google. (2023c). [Street view 3436 S Westminster Way, Bloomington, IN]. ©2026 Google. <https://bit.ly/3P09T2Y>.

Figure 6. Side Bravo-Main Fire Occupancy and Charlie 1 Exposure



Note: Adapted from Google. (2023d). [Street view 3436 S Westminster Way, Bloomington, IN]. ©2026 Google. <https://bit.ly/4rl2qZB>.

Figure 7. Charlie/Delta Corner-Main Fire Occupancy



Note: Adapted from Google. (2023e). [Street view 3436 S Westminster Way, Bloomington, IN]. ©2026 Google. <https://bit.ly/4ljIGUR>.

3436 S Westminster Way is in a suburban residential area on the southeast side of Bloomington, Indiana, within a planned subdivision characterized primarily by detached one to four-family homes arranged along curving residential streets and cul-de-sacs. Most houses in this area are wood frame construction, have attached garages and were constructed from the 1980s to present. Most houses in this area are owner-occupied with a smaller share of rental properties. Most residents of this area of the

community speak English, with a minority of households reporting other languages spoken at home. (Open AI, 2026). Fire and emergency medical call volume in this area is like other suburban areas of the community.

The temperature is currently 33° F (-0.5° C) with wind from the southeast at 7 mph (4 kph) with gusts to 23 mph (37 kph). (Weather Underground, 2026). It is Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> and you are dispatched to a residential fire at 3436 S Westminster Way along with two other engines, a ladder company, medic unit, and command officer at 11:58. The engines and ladder have four-person staffing<sup>1</sup>. **You are the officer of the first arriving engine company.**



**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 engines, ladder, medic unit, and command officer go enroute and dispatch provides an update that callers are reporting flames and smoke from the rear of the house. You will arrive from the north on South Westminster Way.

1. What critical factors would you consider when dispatched and during response? What conversations would you have with your crew during response?
  
2. Based on the dispatch information and what you know about this occupancy and response area, what do anticipate finding on arrival?



**Important!** Answer questions three 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 ladder company will arrive several minutes after you, followed by the second arriving engine, and command officer. The third arriving engine will arrive after the command officer.

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

Approaching the incident from the north on South Westminster Way, you observe flames and smoke from the side of a house in East Commons Drive and your apparatus operator turns right on East Commons Drive to access the fire location (rather than proceeding to the reported address). Watch the [incident video](#) (FireRescueVideos, 2026) from 01:09 to 01:14 and examine Figure 8 illustrating conditions on arrival. Click the link above or scan the QR code to access the video.

Figure 8. Conditions on Arrival-**View from East Commons Drive**



Note: Adapted from FireRescueVideos. (2026). *Specialty Video-Pre Arrival Duplex Fire, Bloomington, IN 3/2/2026*. <https://bit.ly/4rn6FnC>.

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?

Reconnaissance identifies that the building is a duplex, and that the main fire occupancy is on South Westminster Drive. You are positioned adjacent to an attached exposure which faces East Commons Drive. Examine Figure 9 illustrating conditions on the east side of the building that you observed on approach.

Figure 9. Conditions **proceeding to the left, clockwise from South Commons Drive**



Note: Adapted from FireRescueVideos. (2026). *Specialty Video-Pre Arrival Duplex Fire, Bloomington, IN 3/2/2026.* <https://bit.ly/4rn6FnC>. [Image edited to remove tactical operations with in ChatGPT 5.2] Open Ai, (2025).

Figure 10. Conditions in the Main Fire Occupancy **on South Westminster Way**



Note: Adapted from FireRescueVideos. (2026). *Specialty Video-Pre Arrival Duplex Fire, Bloomington, IN 3/2/2026.* <https://bit.ly/4rn6FnC>.

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. Ladder 1 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on South Westminster Way to the south of the incident. 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 a on South Westminster Way to the south of the incident. 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 eight questions. Think about what cues, patterns, or anomalies (differences from conditions that you would anticipate) informed your answers.

10. What information most influenced your expectations?
  
11. Did anything in the incident post-arrival challenge your initial expectations?
  
12. What was the actual problem once you arrived?
  
13. What were your tactical priorities and what was getting in the way of achieving them?

14. During initial operations, was there an immediate threat of serious injury or death to you, your crew, or other companies?

15. Was it reasonable to believe that the Main Fire Occupancy was occupied?

16. Was there searchable space?

17. If you believed it was reasonable that there was searchable space, what could you do about it?

In this incident, the first arriving engine, responding from the north, turned right on East Commons Drive (rather than continuing to the reported location on South Westminster Way) and positioned adjacent to the attached exposure. Alpha was not specified. The initial incident commander identified flames and smoke on “Side Bravo” making East Commons Way Side Alpha. Watch the first 02:00 of the [incident video](#) (FireRescueVideos, 2026) from 01:09 to 01:14 and examine Figure 8 illustrating conditions on arrival. Click the link above or scan the QR code to access the video.



18. Prior to arrival of the first engine company, the battalion chief responding to this incident requested an upgrade in the resource determination adding two engines and a rescue to the incident based on information in the computer aided dispatch notes. What pre-arrival information would prompt you to increase the resource determination? Why?

19. Did you designate East Commons Drive as Side Alpha, or did you identify the address side of the Main Fire Occupancy as Side Alpha? What factors influenced your decision? How might this impact on incident operations?

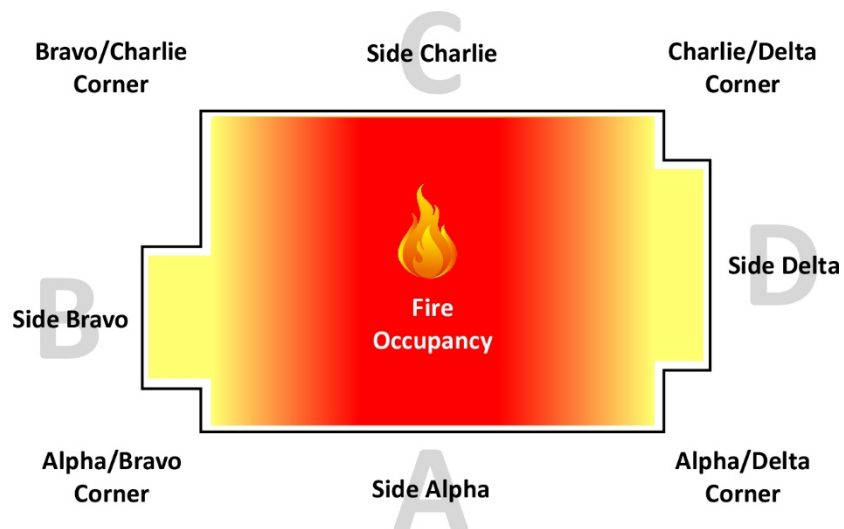
20. Based on building cues, did you identify this building as a duplex, triplex, or fourplex? What factors influenced your determination and what impact would this have on your tactical assignments and ongoing incident operations?

21. In the initial radio report Engine 5 states “Engine 5 has attack, 51 has Operations”. The designation “51” likely refers to the company officer of Engine 5. How would designation of the first arriving company officer as “operations” impact subsequent incident organization? What challenges might this present in an incident like the one in this 10-Minute Training?
22. A bystander reported that the fire was “on the other side” and that the whole garage is engulfed, that’s where it started”. What were the advantages and disadvantages of stretching the first line to the area where fire was visible between the Main Fire Occupancy and the attached Exposure versus to apply water into the garage (which occurred a short time later in the incident)? What factors influenced your answer?

**Additional Learning:** Review standard geographic designation with the members of your company. Discuss your agency’s standard practices for designating Side Alpha (e.g., address side, the “front” or main entrance side, the side that you are operating from, etc.). Then get out in your response area and do a tactical walk around at several occupancies that may present challenges to geographic designation due to layout, configuration, and/or access.

Sides of a building will be described as Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, and Delta (using the phonetic alphabet, not simply the letter) and corners are designated using the phonetic alphabet designations for the intersecting sides as illustrated in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Designating Sides and Corners

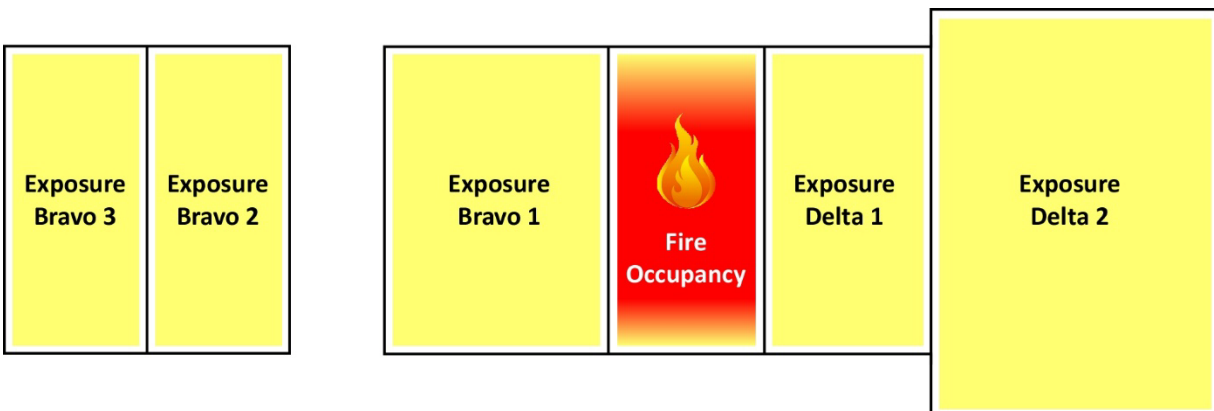


When these designations are used as identifiers for divisions (such as in defensive firefighting operations), it is important to define specific division boundaries. This resolves questions such as; who is responsible for operations at the Alpha/Bravo corner?

The Alpha side of the structure is usually the address side. There will be many situations (such as in apartments or commercial complexes) where it is not clear where the Alpha side is. In situations where there is any confusion about the incidents landmarks, initial arriving IC's must make it clear where the Alpha side is located.

Structural exposures may be attached or detached from the fire building. Having a standardized system to designate exposures facilitates structure protection operations. This builds on the geographic designation of the sides of the building. The basic form is to designate exposures based on the side of the fire building on which they are located numbered moving away from the fire as illustrated in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Designation of Exposures



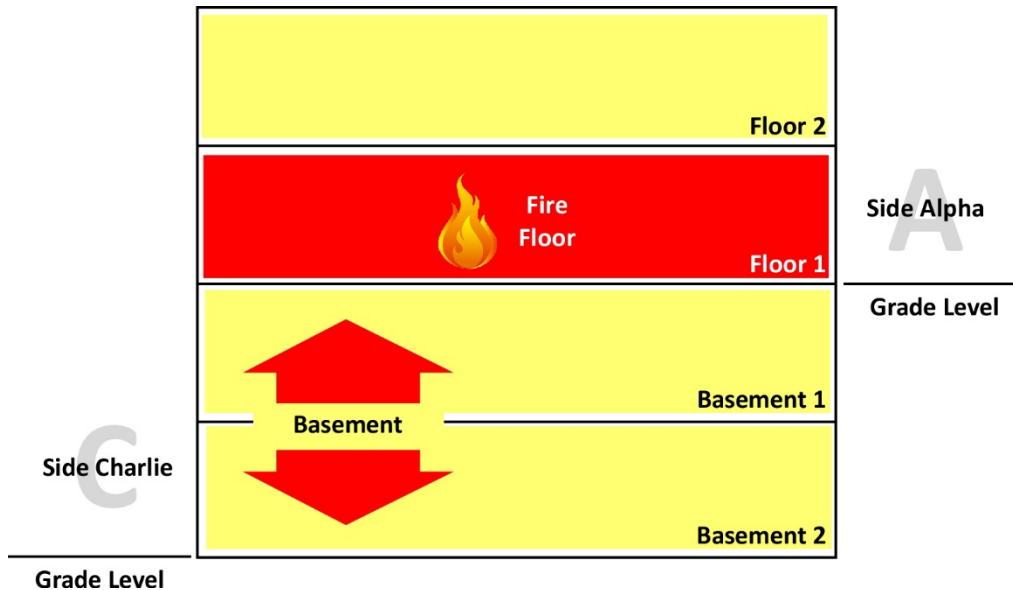
This system has substantial utility when dealing with adjacent residential units or commercial occupancies. When a large building has multiple (smaller) exposures on a given side, they are commonly designated as a single exposure. If smaller exposures are designated collectively, it is important to specify that this is the case.

The basic method for defining geographic location inside a structure is by floor, Floor 1, Floor 2, Floor 3 and so on. However, this does not address floors below grade or the exterior of the structure (such as the roof). The roof is the simplest; it is the "roof". Cellars (access from the exterior only) and basements (interior and possibly exterior access) present a somewhat different challenge. A single level below grade may be designated as a cellar or basement. Multiple levels below grade are designated as Basement 1, Basement 2, and so on.

Another complicated factor is presented by buildings that have a varied number of floors above grade at the front, rear, or sides. Some structures present two stories from the Alpha side while appearing to be three or four stories from the Charlie side. To standardize designation, levels below grade are

determined based on the Alpha Side of the building as illustrated in Figure 13. However, it is critical to advise all companies operating at the incident of differences in elevation and number of stories presenting on each side of the building.

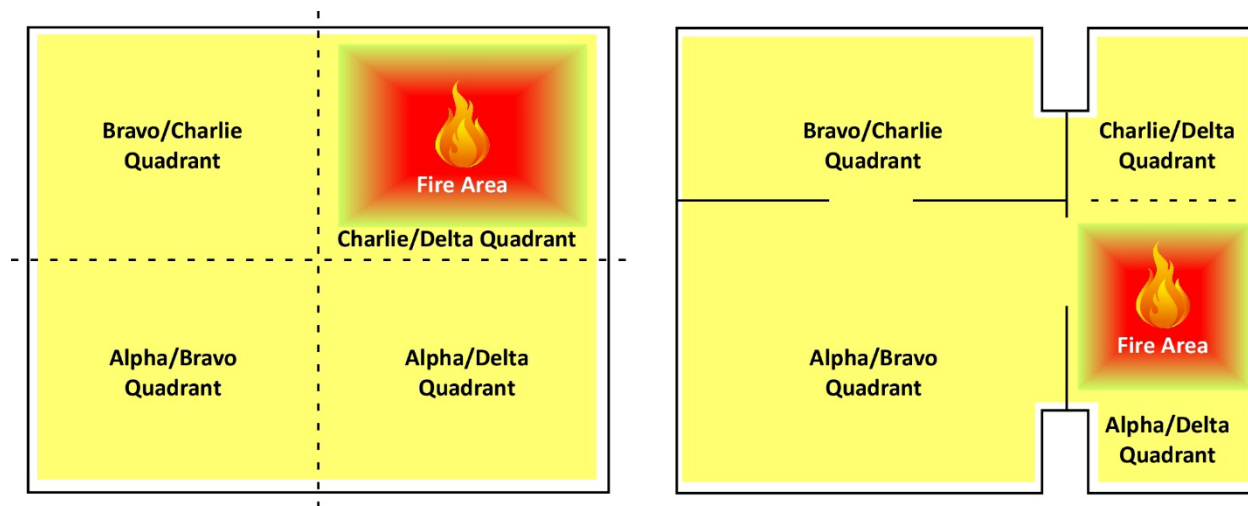
Figure 13. Inside – Above and Below Grade



**Note:** The building pictured in this figure would be a four story on Side Charlie with two basement levels. This is common in areas with steep terrain. **Important!** It is also possible to have a level below grade presenting on Side Alpha when the building lot slopes up from the street. If this is not evident on arrival, it should be communicated in the update report.

Large interior areas may be subdivided into four sections or quadrants to facilitate communication and assignment of resources. If possible, existing landmarks such as fire walls and building openings should be used to establish boundaries (even if this results in uneven quadrants as illustrated in Figure 14).

Figure 14. Large Area – Quadrants and Landmarks



## References

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