



In-Station Training

TM 26-12a Strip Mall Fire



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Purpose

Strip mall fires often require a significant resource commitment to address the fire and the exposures; this is particularly true when the main fire occupancy is in the middle of the row.

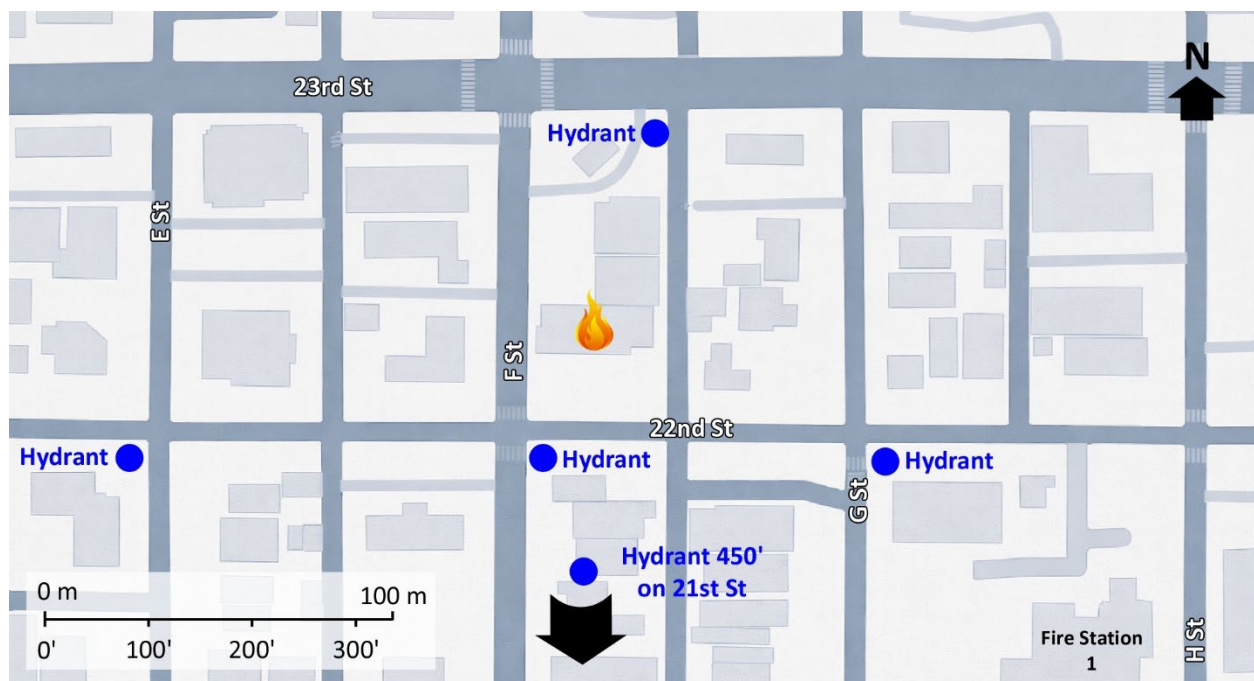
Learning Outcomes

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 fire in a vacant strip mall at 22nd Street and F Street, Bakersfield, California on Monday, February 9, 2026, at 01:48 (Barraza, 2026; BakersfieldNow, 2026; & Broadcastify 2026a & 2026b). Review the map and photos (Figures 1-7) to gain an understanding of the building and area.

Figure 1. Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2026a). [Map, 22nd Street and F Street, Bakersfield, CA]. Map data ©2026 Google. <https://bit.ly/4s4K5Bg>.

The closest hydrant is on 22nd Street, across the street from the Alpha/Bravo Corner of the Main Fire Occupancy. Additional hydrants are in the area as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2026b). [Aerial view 22nd Street and F Street, Bakersfield, CA]. Imagery © Google, Imagery © Airbus Maxar Technologies, Map Data © 2026. <https://bit.ly/46P8X7K>.

Figure 3. Alpha/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022a). [Street view 22nd Street and F Street, Bakersfield, CA]. ©2025 Google. <https://bit.ly/3PvGcgy>.

Figure 4. Side Alpha



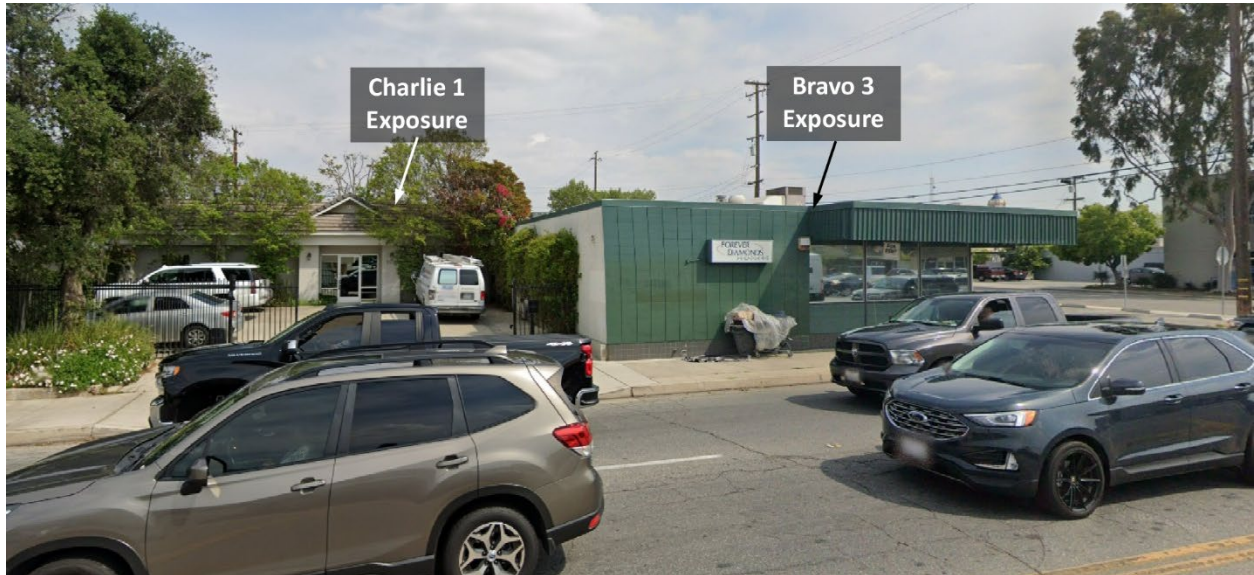
Note: Adapted from Google. (2022b). [Street view 22nd Street and F Street, Bakersfield, CA]. ©2025 Google <https://bit.ly/4s6cMxX>.

Figure 5. Side Bravo



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022c). [Street view 22nd Street and F Street, Bakersfield, CA]. Map data ©2025 Google <https://bit.ly/46X5cNu>.

Figure 6. Bravo/Charlie Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022d). [Street view 22nd Street and F Street, Bakersfield, CA]. Map data ©2025 Google <https://bit.ly/4lovYUU>.

Figure 7. Charlie/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022e). [Street view 22nd Street and F Street, Bakersfield, CA]. Map data ©2025 Google <https://bit.ly/4cLb6oO>.

The temperature is currently 33° F with wind from the east at 7 mph (Weather Underground, 2025). It is Monday, February 9th at 01:48 you are dispatched to a fire in a vacant strip mall at the corner of 22nd Street and F Street along with five engine companies, two ladder companies, a medic unit, and another

command officer. **You are the first arriving command officer** and hear all first alarm companies go enroute. The engine and ladder companies have four-person staffing¹

This incident is in the 22nd Street corridor near downtown Bakersfield in a mixed commercial and urban neighborhood arranged on a grid street pattern. The immediate block is primarily commercial, with offices, small businesses, and service uses; nearby blocks transition to older residential areas containing single-family homes, duplexes, and small apartment buildings largely constructed between the 1910s and 1950s. Central Bakersfield includes a mix of renter- and owner-occupied housing with relatively high residential turnover. English and Spanish are widely spoken in the area. There are a substantial number of unhoused individuals in the central Bakersfield districts near downtown corridors (Open AI, 2026). Structure fire frequency in this area is typical of older commercial/residential areas in the city.

You are out of quarters, returning from another incident and anticipate that you will arrive shortly after the first two engines, and the ladder company. The incident location is three blocks from Fire Station 1, and you anticipate that Engine 1 and Ladder 1 will have a short response time. While you are enroute, dispatch provides an update that they received the initial call from a law enforcement unit that is on scene of a structure fire at approximately 2200 22nd Street with no additional information.



Time starts now! Answer the first 11 questions within the next 10 minutes. Save discussion for after answering these questions.

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

2. Based on the dispatch information and what you know about this occupancy and response area, what do anticipate finding on arrival?

Engine 1 arrives and provides the following initial radio report.

On-scene, small one story strip mall, working fire center occupancy with smoke from the roof and overhang on Side Alpha, stretching an attack line on Side Alpha for fire control, on a hydrant, offensive strategy, continue the assignment Engine 1 is 22nd Command.

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

22nd Command provides the following follow-up report:

No 360 due to obstructions and size, no basement, one story all sides, this building is boarded up, limited access on Side Charlie. Forcing entry on Side Alpha, continuing offensive.

Ladder 1 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on 22nd Street, Command provides the following tactical assignment:

Position on F Street, Bravo/Charlie corner and give me a roof report.

Engine 2 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on a hydrant on 22nd and G Streets, 22nd Command provides the following tactical assignment:

Park out of the way and stretch an attack line off Engine 1 through Side Alpha of the Bravo 1 for fire control and primary search.

Medic 1 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 just to the west of F Street on 22nd Street. Command provides the following assignment.

Go on deck, Side Alpha.

You approach the incident location from the west on 22nd Street and position on Side Alpha.

3. What actions will you take prior to contacting IC #1 (Engine 1) to begin command transfer? Consider if you would exit your command vehicle to perform reconnaissance before initiating a command transfer with IC #1.



Important! Answer questions four through 11 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 (Barraza, 2026) from 02:15 to 02:45 and Examine Figure 8 illustrating conditions on your arrival.

Figure 8. Conditions on Arrival



Note: Adapted from Barraza, B. (2026). *Fatal second-alarm commercial structure fire In Central Bakersfield*. <https://bit.ly/4sGNKVZ>.

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

Applying water with limited effect in the Main Fire Occupancy, we need an additional line for fire control and to get a company into the Delta 1 for primary search and check for extension.

5. State the communication you would have with IC #1 and dispatch to complete the command transfer exactly as you would transmit it.

6. What action would you take based on the CAN from Engine 1 (IC #1) and your observation of exterior conditions? State the communications you would have with the operating companies exactly as you would transmit them.

After you complete the command transfer, Engine 2 contacts you with the following priority traffic message.

Command, Engine 2 with priority traffic. Victim located in the Bravo 1, removing through Side Alpha, need EMS.

Important! If at any point in this 10-Minute Training, you would change strategy, stop and state the communications that you would have with dispatch and the operating companies exactly as you would transmit them.

7. Engine 3 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on a hydrant on 23rd Street at the alley, just north of the incident. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.
8. Engine 4 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on a hydrant at E and 22nd Streets. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.
9. Chief 2 arrives and reports that she is Level 1 on 22nd Street to the east of the incident. State the tactical assignment you would give her exactly as you would transmit it.
10. Ladder 4 reports that they are Level 1 at 22nd and G Streets. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.

11. Engine 5 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on a hydrant at E and 22nd Streets. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.



Reflect on your strategic decision-making and responses to questions one through 11 before answering the next eight questions. Think about what differences from conditions that you would anticipate (cues, patterns, or anomalies) inform your answers.

12. What information most influenced your expectations?

13. Did anything in the incident post-arrival challenge your initial expectations?

14. What was the problem?

15. What was getting in the way of achieving your tactical priorities?

16. Was there anything in this incident that could have hurt or killed you (right now)?

17. Was it reasonable to believe that the Main Fire Occupancy and Exposure Delta 1 were occupied?

18. Was there searchable space in the Main Fire Occupancy and/or the exposures?

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

Watch the remainder of the [incident video](#) (Barraza, 2026) before answering the remaining questions. Click the link or scan the QR code to access the video.



The initial assignment for the actual incident included three engines, two ladder companies, and two battalion chiefs. The second alarm doubled the resource determination, but the IC reduced the assignment to two engines, one ladder company, and one battalion chief (Broadcastify, 2026a & 2026b). A victim was located and removed by Engine 2 during search, CPR was initiated, but the victim was pronounced deceased on scene.

20. If you believed that the building may have been occupied, what cues or factors influenced your assessment? After answering this question, go back and look at Figures 3 and 5. Conditions may have been different at the time of the incident, but how would these conditions influence your thought process and decision making if you observed them shortly before the incident during your travel through the area or on arrival at the incident?

21. In this incident, IC #1 assigned the second battalion chief as Safety Officer (as training staff who would ordinarily respond to fill that role was unavailable). What assignment did you give the second battalion chief? If you increased the resource determination to a second alarm, what assignments would you have given the third and fourth battalion chiefs? What factors influenced the assignments given to the additional battalion chiefs?

22. The companies appeared to have remained in an offensive strategy (working inside the collapse zone or inside the building) for the duration of this incident. Was this consistent with your strategic approach in this 10-Minute Training? What factors influenced your choice of strategy?

Additional Learning: Get your companies out in their response areas and do a tactical walk around at one or more strip malls. Discuss how occupancy types may impact tactical operations. If you have vacant strip malls or commercial buildings, also do a tactical walk around at these occupancies and discuss how their status as vacant may impact strategy and tactics.

Conduct multi-company drills in your response area or at a training center to exercise your companies' initial tactical operations at commercial occupancies. The capability of each company is a critical factor in selection of strategy and tactics. You need to know the spread!

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