



In-Station Training

TM 26-20a Residential Fire



Author

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Purpose

Primary search is a standard tactical component of an offensive strategy. However, reports or observation of trapped occupants increases the sense of urgency experienced by both the IC and operating companies.

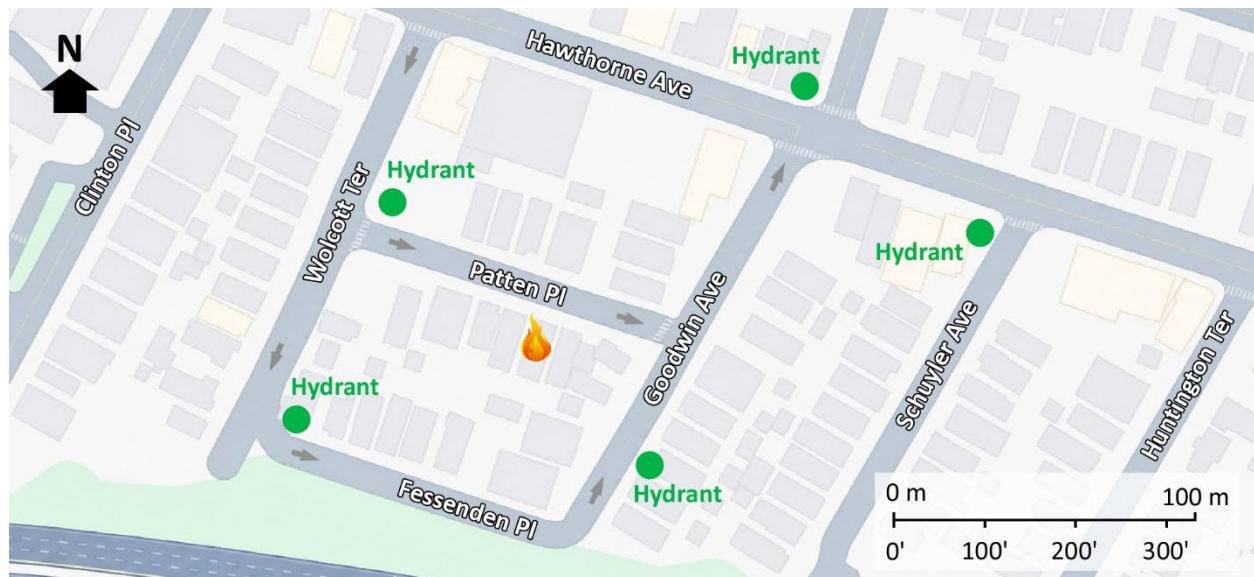
Learning Outcomes

Incident commanders demonstrate command presence, 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 10 Patten Place in Newark, New Jersey on Friday, March 20, 2026, at 02:03 (Jersey Shore Fire Response, 2026; Smith, 2926; & Broadcastify 2026a, 2026b & 2026c). Review the map and photos (Figures 1-6) to gain an understanding of the building and area involved.

Figure 1. Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2026a). [Map, 10 Patten Place, Newark, NJ]. Map data ©2026 Google.
<https://bit.ly/4dxCeWS>.

The closest hydrant is on Goodwin Avenue and there are other hydrants in the area as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2026b). [Aerial view 10 Patten Place, Newark, NJ]. Imagery © Google, Imagery © Airbus Maxar Technologies, Map Data © 2026. <https://bit.ly/4nCzV9v>.

Figure 3. Exposure Bravo



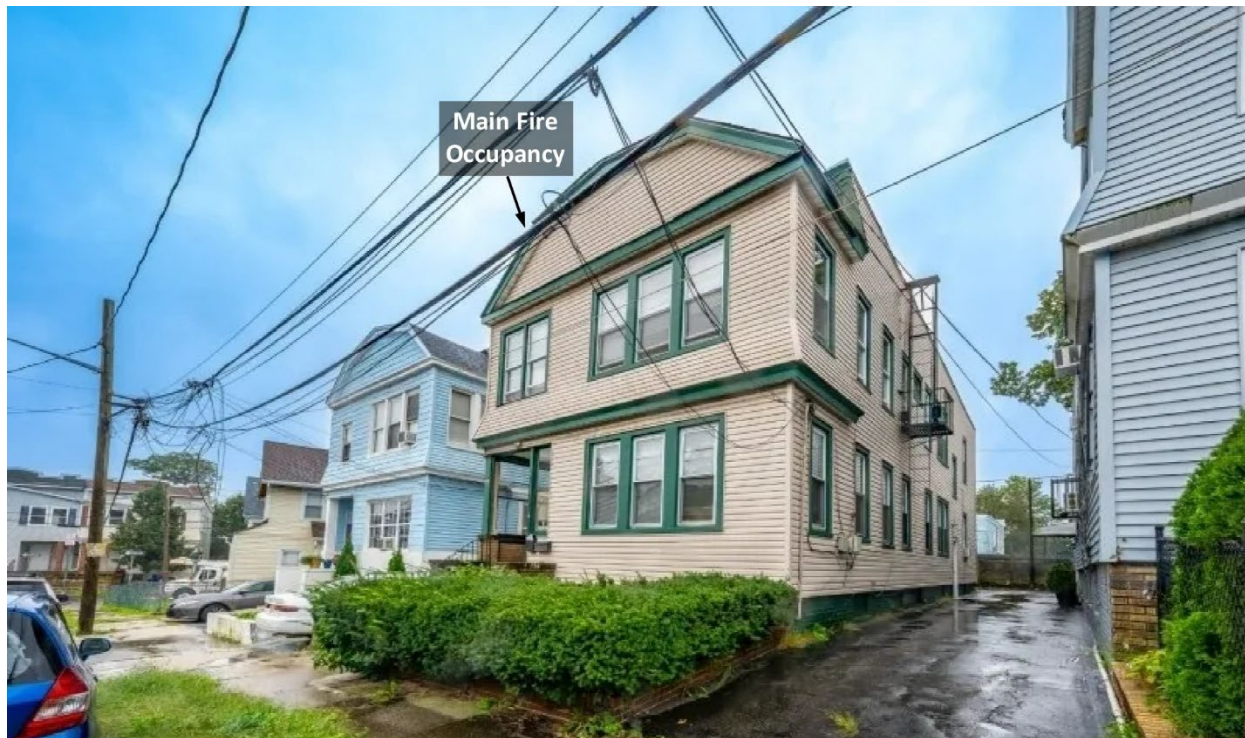
Note: Adapted from Google. (2024a). [Street view 10 Patten Place, Newark, NJ]. ©2026 Google. <https://bit.ly/49XRwDg>.

Figure 4. Alpha/Bravo Corner



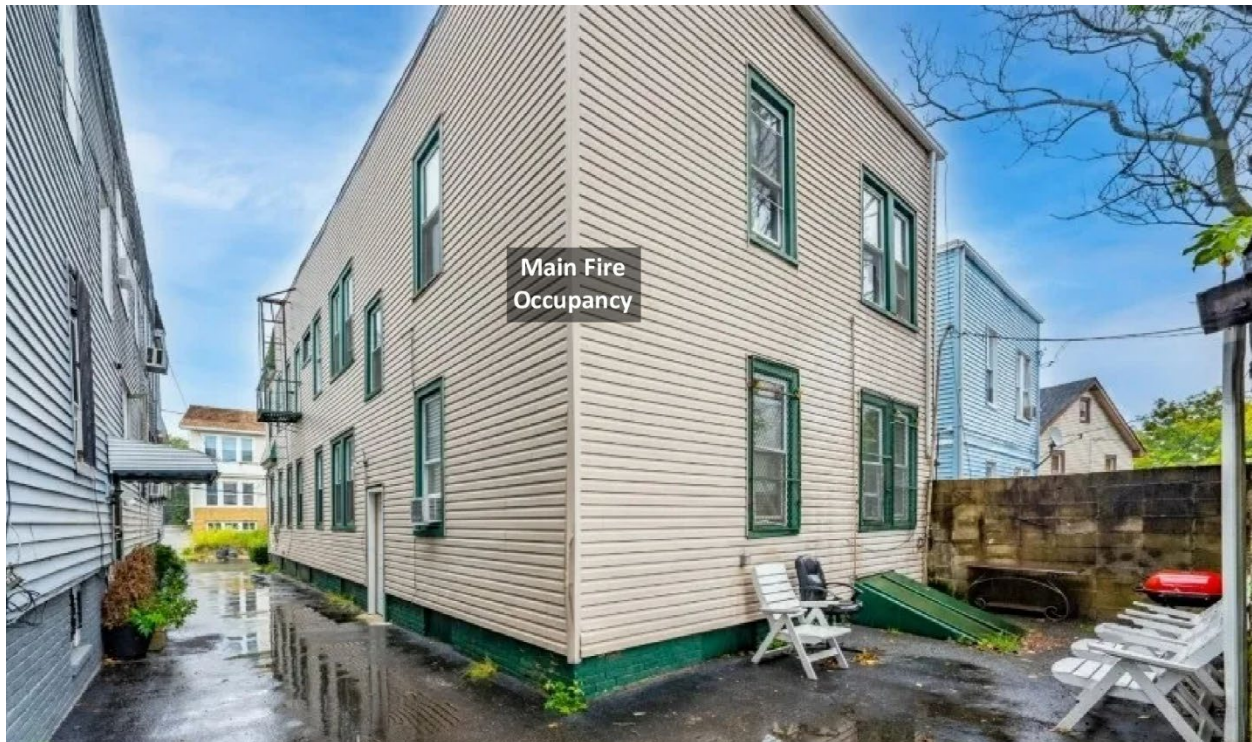
Note: Adapted from Google. (2024b). [Street view 10 Patten Place, Newark, NJ]. ©2026 Google. <https://bit.ly/3PoGz6T>.

Figure 5. Alpha/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Realtor.com. (2024). 10 Patten Pl, Newark, NJ 07112. <https://bit.ly/4eQQvAp>.

Figure 6, Charlie/Delta Corner



Note: Adapted from Realtor.com. (2024). 10 Patten Pl, Newark, NJ 07112. <https://bit.ly/4eQQvAp>.

The incident is in a dense urban residential neighborhood with closely spaced multifamily housing on a traditional street grid. Many of the residential buildings in this area were constructed in the early 20th century. Most of the residential structures in this area are rental properties. The predominant language in this neighborhood is English with a small percentage of households speaking other languages. (Open AI, 2026). Fire and emergency medical call volume in this area is typical of other densely populated areas of the community.

The temperature is currently 48° F (9° C) with wind from the southwest at 6 mph (10 kph). (Weather Underground, 2026). It is Friday, March 20th and you are dispatched to a **residential fire** at 10 Patten Place, along with five engines, two ladder companies, medic unit, and a second command officer at 02:03. The engines and ladder have four-person staffing¹. **You will be the first arriving command officer.**



Time starts now! Answer the first 12 questions within the next 10 minutes. Save discussion until after you have answered these questions.

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

While responding, dispatch provides an update that **the fire is reported on the second floor in Unit 2F**. You hear the engines, ladders, medic unit, and the second command officer go enroute.

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

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

You anticipate that you will arrive after the first engine and ladder company. The remainder of the first alarm companies will arrive after you.

Engine 1 arrives and provides the following initial radio report.

On-scene, small two story fourplex, working fire on Floor 2, fire showing from two windows, Alpha/Bravo corner, stretching an attack line through Side Alpha for fire control, offensive strategy, Engine 1 is Patten Command.

Ladder 1 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on Wolcott at Patten, Command provides the following tactical assignment:

Position on Alpha/Delta, primary search floor 2.

Immediately after assigning Ladder 1 to primary search, IC #1 changes their tactical assignment with the following priority traffic message.

Multiple occupants trapped on the fire escape, Side Delta. Ladder 1, ladder the fire escape for rescue.

Patten Command provides the following follow-up report:

360 complete, walk-up basement on Side Charlie, not involved, two stories all sides. Ladder 1 rescuing occupants from the fire escape on Side Delta. Engine 1 is accountability on Alpha.

You approach the incident location from Goodwin Avenue and position at the intersection of Goodwin and Patten (Alpha/Bravo Corner).

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



Important! Answer questions 4 through 12 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](#) (Jersey Shore Fire Response, 2026) from 01:45 to 02:15 and examine Figure 7 illustrating conditions on arrival. Click the link above or scan the QR code to access the video.

Figure 7. Conditions on Arrival



Note: Adapted from M Jersey Shore Fire Response. (2026). *Dramatic rescue: Newark firefighters rescue 3 trapped on fire escape | heavy fire 3/20/26* [video]. <https://bit.ly/43gkgU5>

4. State your command transfer communication after IC #1 acknowledges your radio contact (exactly as you would transmit it).

After contacting IC #1 for a command transfer and confirming the position and function of Engine 1 and Ladder 1 and requesting a CAN, Engine 1 provides the following report:

Engine 1 has water on the fire with good effect, air status ¾, need companies for primary search and to check for extension in the other unit on Floor 2.

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

6. Engine 2 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on a hydrant on Walcott and Patten. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.

7. Engine 3 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on a hydrant on Hawthorne and Goodwin. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.

8. Chief 2 arrives and reports that she is Level 1 at Hawthorne and Walcott. State the tactical assignment you would give her exactly as you would transmit it.

9. Ladder 4 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 at Hawthorne and Schuyler. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.

10. Medic 4 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 at Hawthorne and Goodwin. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.

11. Engine 4 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on a hydrant on Hawthorne and Goodwin. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.

12. Engine 5 arrives and reports that they are Level 1 on a hydrant at Hawthorne and Schuyler. State the tactical assignment you would give them exactly as you would transmit it.



Reflect on your strategic decision-making and responses to questions 1 through 12 before answering the next eight questions. Think about what cues, patterns, or anomalies (differences from conditions that you would anticipate) informed your answers.

13. What information most influenced your expectations?

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

15. What was the actual problem once you arrived?

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

17. During initial operations, was there an immediate threat of serious injury or death to the members of the companies operating at this incident?

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

19. Was there searchable space?

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

Watch the [incident video](#) from 02:15 to 05:30 to gain perspective on initial fire control and rescue operations during this incident before answering the remaining questions.



21. Based on your initial observation of building, environment, smoke, air track, heat, and flame (BE-SAHF) indicators, what extent of involvement and fire conditions would you anticipate that Engine 1 would find on Floor 2?

The firefighter who located the occupants on the fire escape on Side Delta, reported that he had “three victims on the Bravo Side, on the fire escape, need help”. The IC (Deputy 1) acknowledged and transmitted a report that members were bringing victims down on Side Delta. It is possible that the IC (who was working from a mobile position) provided a face-to-face assignment to provide additional resources to assist with the rescue.

22. Given the information provided by the firefighter who located the victims, what help would you have provided?

Additional Learning

Companies operating at this incident quickly accomplished fire control and rescued the woman and two children trapped on the fire escape without injury. The incident audio and the remainder of the incident video provide multiple opportunities for additional learning. This incident audio includes both dispatch and tactical frequencies, as such some communications on the tactical frequency may have been covered by dispatch communications (this accounts for some variation between the radio communications in the audio and video clips).

Incident Audio: Listen to the first 03:35 of the [incident audio](#) (dispatch through assumption of command by Deputy 1) (Hartin, 2026). Click the link above or scan the QR code to access the audio. This recording includes radio communications from dispatch through placing the fire under control.



Incident Video: Watch the complete [incident video](#) (Jersey Shore Fire Response, 2026). The video includes most of the radio traffic from the arrival of the first engine company until after placing the fire under control. Click the link above or scan the QR code to access the video.



As you listen to this segment of incident audio and watch the video, focus on radio communications, working positions and assignments of the command officers, and tactical orders given to the companies operating at this incident. Consider lessons learned from this incident in the following areas:

- Command presence.
- Incident communications (e.g., initial radio report, follow up report, tactical orders).
- Incident organization.

Consider the following questions as you reflect on lessons learned:

- How might the limited information provided by the first arriving company have impacted command officer's pre-arrival anticipation and planning?
- The first arriving company indicated that they needed a supply line from a hydrant. What assumptions did Battalion 4 make when he instructed "all companies bring water"?
- There was no mention of 360-degree reconnaissance. What critical information might the IC have been gained by performing reconnaissance?
- The IC identified this building as 2 ½-story. What is the difference between a 2-story building and one that is 2 ½ stories. What are the fire behavior, safety, and tactical implications when a building has a "half story"?
- The IC (Deputy 1) assigned battalion chiefs as "interior operations chief", "ISO" [incident safety officer], and "Division Delta". The IC made these assignments face-to-face and then announced to dispatch and the companies operating at the incident. How might these assignments and method of communication have impacted on the effectiveness of incident organization and accountability?
- At times during the incident, a personal alert safety system (PASS) can be heard sounding. Did it appear that anyone took action to investigate this? If PASS activation is ignored as if it is a normal condition on the fireground, what problems could result?
- Once the fire was under control, the IC had dispatch conduct a roll call to determine if all companies had PAR (personnel accountability report). What factors influenced task, tactical, and strategic accountability during this incident?

Reflect on the answer to these questions and consider how the lessons learned from this incident can inform your organization and your work as a command officer. Identify one area to focus on in your ongoing professional development.

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