



In-Station Training

TM 26-23 Residential Fire - Mayday



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Purpose

Sometimes fires appear to be routine, right up until they don't. Patterns of cues related to fire behavior and collapse potential including the building, environment, smoke, air track, heat and flame (BE-SAHF) may be extremely subtle, making them difficult to recognize.

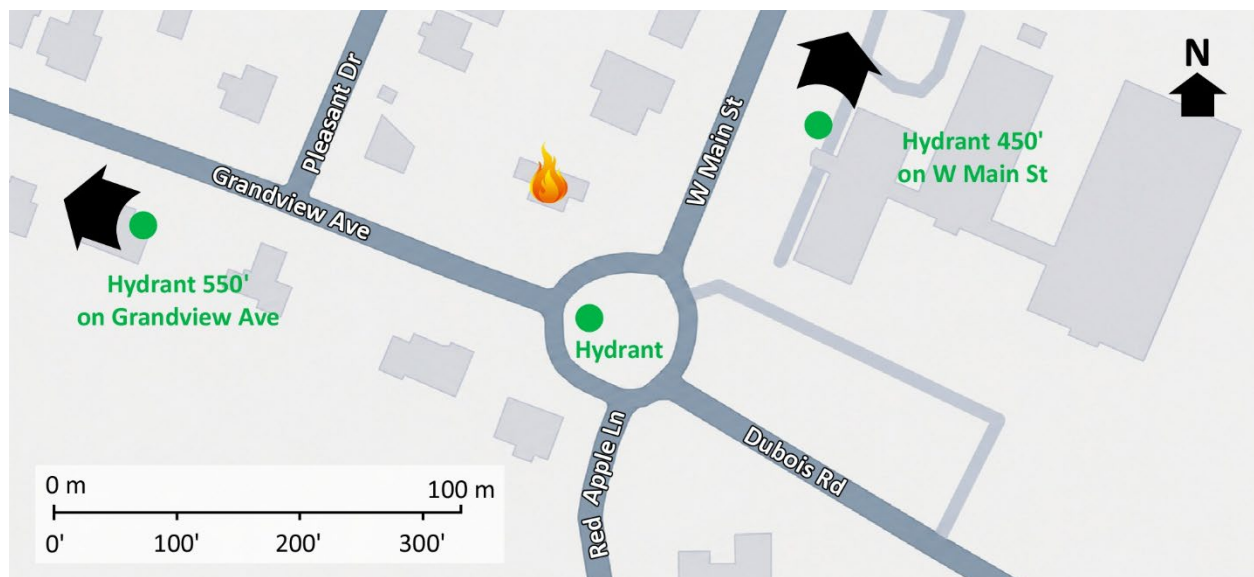
Learning Outcomes

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 327 Grandview Avenue in Catskill, New York on Sunday, May 10, 2006, at 07:05 (CBA6 Albany, 2026a & 2026 b & Catskill Fire Company, Inc., 2026a & 2026b). 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, 327 Grandview Avenue, Catskill, NY]. Map data ©2026 Google. <https://bit.ly/4adbrOD>.

The closest hydrant is at the traffic circle at the end of Grandview Avenue and there is a second hydrant on West Main Street as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 2. Aerial View



Note: Adapted from Google. (2026b). [Aerial view 327 Grandview Avenue, Catskill, NY]. Imagery © Google, Imagery © Airbus Maxar Technologies, Map Data © 2026. <https://bit.ly/4x0igNi>.

Figure 3. Alpha/Bravo Corner



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022a). [Street view 327 Grandview Avenue, Catskill, NY]. ©2026 Google. <https://bit.ly/4x0igNi>.

Figure 4. Side Alpha



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022b). [Street view 327 Grandview Avenue, Catskill, NY]. ©2026 Google. <https://bit.ly/3PMUgwC>.

Figure 5. Side Delta



Note: Adapted from Google. (2022c). [Street view 327 Grandview Avenue, Catskill, NY]. ©2026 Google. <https://bit.ly/4ade2In>.

Figure 6. Side Charlie



Note: Adapted from Google. (2026). [Aerial view 327 Grandview Avenue, Catskill, NY]. Imagery © Google, Imagery © Airbus Maxar Technologies, Map Data © 2026. <https://bit.ly/4dU2Amb>. Image Created with ChatGPT 5.5, DALL-E] Open Ai, (2026).

327 Grandview Avenue is in a low-density residential area, with detached single-family homes on larger village-edge lots and nearby transitions to small multifamily or mobile-home properties. 41% of homes in the area were built before 1960. Dwellings are 68.1% owner-occupied housing with 92.9% of residents in the same house as the prior year. Most residents speak English with only 7.2% speaking a language other than English at home (Open AI, 2026). Fire and emergency medical call volume in this area is generally low, typical of a small suburban to rural community.

The temperature is currently 50 F (10° C) with no appreciable wind from the north (Weather Underground, 2026). It is Sunday, May 10th and you are dispatched for a residential fire at 327 Grandview Avenue at 07:05 along with two other engines, a ladder company, medic unit, and command officer. Your engine has four-person staffing¹. **You are the officer of the engine company.**

This [simulation video](#) (Hartin, 2026) provides prompts to pause the simulation and answer related questions. Each question has a brief prompt that appears in the simulation (e.g., the text “Critical Factors” is a prompt for question one. Click the link above or scan the QR code to access the incident simulation video.



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



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

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 you anticipate finding on arrival?



Important! Answer questions 3 through 9 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.

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?
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 Grandview at Pleasant. 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 hydrant on West Main. 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 building was occupied?
16. Was there searchable space?

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

In this incident the first arriving company stretched an attack line through a door on Side Alpha for fire control and primary search. Watch the [incident video](#) (CBS6 Albany, 2026a) from 00:18 to 00:53 before answering the next several questions. Click the link above or scan the QR code to access the incident video.



18. What immediate action would you take if the stairs collapsed under your firefighter as in this incident?
19. What communication would you have with IC #2. State the mayday message exactly as you would transmit it?

Watch the [news video](#) of (CBS6 Albany, 2026b) from 00:40 to 02:26 as Firefighter William Rogers and Lieutenant Ben Swart detail what they experienced in this incident. Click the link above or scan the QR code to access the news video.



20. Firefighter William Rogers and Lieutenant Ben Swart were operating under the assumption that the fire was on Floor 2. What cues did you observe in the simulation and incident video that would lead to this conclusion? What conflicting cues did you observe (if any) in the incident video that may have indicated that the fire may have originated on Floor 1?
21. Firefighter Rogers stated that he had been “trained to sound the stairs going up” but that it didn’t make any difference. Do you and the members of your crew sound the floor and stairs when moving inside a fire building? Why or why not?
22. How do you think Lieutenant Ben Swart’s prior mayday and line-of-duty death experience impacted his decision making in this incident? What are your prior experiences with maydays? How might this impact on your decision making in a situation like this?

Additional Learning

Have a look at this [short video clip](#) (Fire Engineering, 2025) explaining why sounding the floor is an unreliable indicator of the structural stability of floor systems.



Use Command Competence Training Bulletin [25-02 Developing Proficiency in Mayday Communications](#) (Hartin, 2025a) to review mayday communications with the members of your crew. Reinforce:

Maydays must be declared as soon as the person or crew(s) affected knows that they cannot safely exit an IDLH hazard zone. This is especially true for a person or crew who are experiencing a mayday with a diminished air supply. The sooner the mayday is transmitted, the sooner the IC and operating crews can react to resolve the mayday.

Under stress, people perform the way that they are trained. Use of a conditions, actions, and needs (CAN) report as an integral part of calling a mayday uses a common communications skill and provides the IC with critical information needed to respond to the problem. One difference between normal communications procedures and calling a mayday is that it is transmitted as a broadcast without using the order model.

Mayday, Mayday, Mayday *Do not un-key the microphone, but continue with the Mayday CAN which includes the following information:*

1. **Who:** The identity of who has the mayday. Unit, unit riding position, or entire name
2. **What:** Caused the condition(s) of the mayday
3. **Where:** Identify your current location/surroundings or your last known location
4. **Needs:** Provide the needs that will help resolve the mayday. **Needs are critical to adjusting the incident action plan (IAP) and deploying resources to address the mayday.**

For a deeper dive into mayday communications, review Command Competence Training Bulletin [Mayday Communications-An Introduction](#) (2025b, Hartin).

These resources and a curated collection of 10-Minute Training Tactical Decision Games focused on mayday incidents can be accessed at [10-Minute Training: The Mayday Collection](#) on the Command Competence website. Click the link above or scan the QR code to go to the Mayday Collection.



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