In-Station Training

TM 26-41 Residential Fire

Author

Chief Ed Hartin

Purpose

Reading the fire and identifying the stage(s) of fire development, burning regime (fuel or ventilation limited), and likely fire location are critical elements of arrival size-up for both fire officers and firefighters.

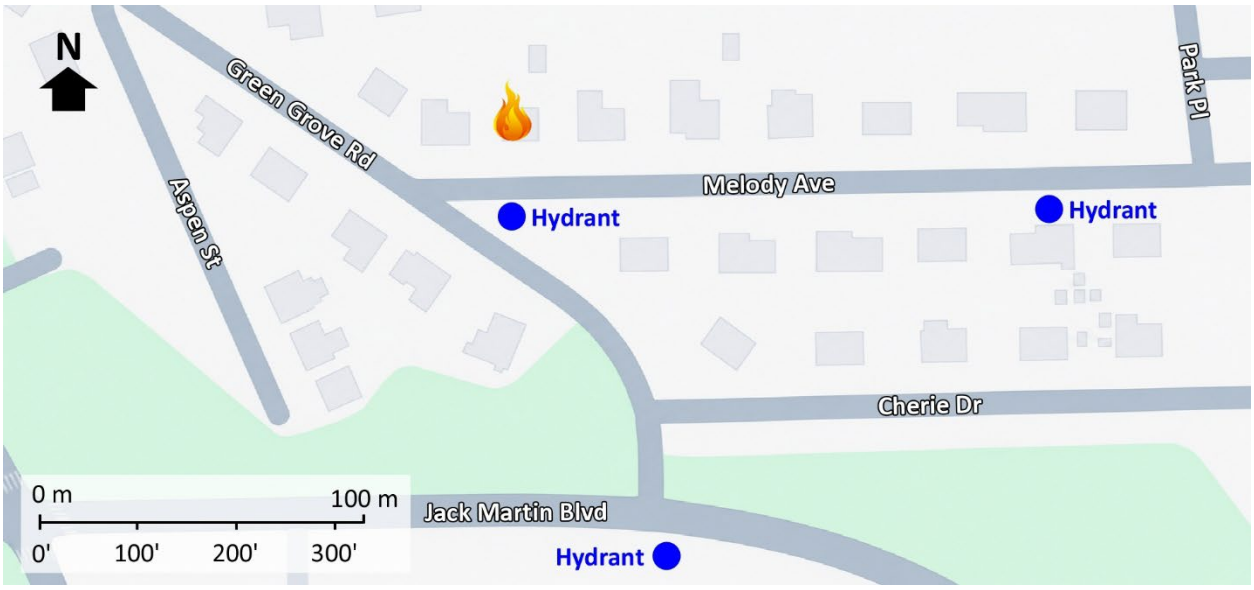
Learning Outcomes

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 75 Melody Avenue in Brick Township, New Jersey on September 24, 2026, at 17:30 (Jersey Shore Fire Response, 2026; Broadcastify, 2026a, 2026b). Review the map and photos (Figures 1-5) to gain an understanding of the building and area involved.

Figure 1. Map of the Incident Area



Note: Adapted from Google. (2026a). [Map, 75 Melody Avenue, Brick Township, NJ]. Map data ©2026 Google. https://bit.ly/4ypXXJx.

The closest hydrant is directly across the street from the Main Fire Occupancy and there are other hydrants in the area as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 2. Aerial View

Note: Adapted from Google. (2026b). [Aerial view 75 Melody Avenue, Brick Township, NJ]. Imagery © Google, Imagery © Airbus Maxar Technologies, Map Data © 2026. https://bit.ly/4hvukiE.

Figure 3. Alpha/Bravo Corner

Note: Adapted from Google. (2025a). [Street view 75 Melody Avenue, Brick Township, NJ]. ©2026 Google. https://bit.ly/4zfKh43.

Figure 4. Side Alpha

Note: Adapted from Google. (2025b). [Street view 75 Melody Avenue, Brick Township, NJ]. ©2026 Google. https://bit.ly/4ARVvgO.

Figure 5. Alpha/Delta Corner

Note: Adapted from Google. (2025c). [Street view 75 Melody Avenue, Brick Township, NJ]. ©2026 Google. https://bit.ly/4hqvSvN.

The incident is in a suburban residential neighborhood. The area consists primarily of detached single-family homes on relatively small to moderate-sized lots in a planned street pattern. Most homes along Melody Avenue were built during the 1970s, and residential properties on the street are predominantly owner-occupied. English is the predominant language, with a smaller proportion of households speaking

other languages at home (OpenAI, 2026). Fire and EMS call volume in this area is moderate and typical of other areas of the suburban community.

The temperature is currently 63° F (17° C) with wind from the north at 7 mph (11 kph) (Weather Underground, 2026). It is Thursday, September 24th at 17:30, and you are dispatched along with two other engines, a ladder company, a medic unit, and a command officer for a residential fire at 75 Melody Avenue. The engine and ladder companies have four-person staffing[1]. **You are the officer of the first arriving engine company**.

Time starts now! Answer the first nine questions within the next ten 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?

Immediately after you go en route, dispatch provides an update that the fire is in the kitchen and that all occupants are out of the house.

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 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 arrive from the south on Green Grove Road. The ladder company arrives a short time later followed by the second engine company and command officer. All other first alarm resources will arrive after the command officer. Examine Figure 6 illustrating conditions on arrival and watch the incident video (Jersey Shore Fire Response, 2026) from 00:19 to 00:29. Click on the link or scan the QR code to access the video.

[1] If your staffing and deployment are different, use your own resource assignment and staffing.

Figure 6. Conditions on Arrival

Note: Adapted from Jersey Shore Fire Response. (2026). Pre arrival 2 alarm structure fire Brick, New Jersey 9/24/26. https://bit.ly/3TCgSSc.

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?

Flames were visible in the kitchen from the front door. Smoke conditions on Side Charlie are consistent with those on Side Alpha. The rear door is closed, and windows are intact on Side Charlie.

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 Green Grove at Cherie. 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 the hydrant on Jack Martin at Green Grove. 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 and/or the Bravo and Delta Exposures were 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?

The Brick Township Fire Department is comprised of four volunteer fire companies, each with their own chief. In this context "fire company" is the volunteer fire organization (the term "company" also applies to engine companies, ladder companies and rescue companies). The department protects a population of around 73,000 people in an area of approximately 32 square miles with 12 engines, four ladders/towers, and three heavy rescues operating from nine stations.

Several chief officers arrived before the first fire company, Ladder 2325 (a quint). One of the chief officers entered the house and applied water from a 2 ½-gallon pressurized water extinguisher to slow fire growth before arrival of Ladder 2325. The crew of Ladder 2325 stretched a 1 ¾" attack line for fire control. The crew from a third service medic unit and the first arriving engine, Engine 2311 assisted with fire control and establishing water supply. The second arriving engine, Engine 2471 was assigned to primary and secondary search. Watch the incident video (Jersey Shore Fire Response, 2026) from 00:29 to 06:00. Click the link or scan the QR code to access the video.

18. What were the similarities and differences between your company's actions and the tactical assignments given to Ladder 1 and Engine 2 and those implemented by the companies operating at this incident? What critical factors influenced your choice of strategy and tactics?

19. Given the requirements for two-in/two-out specified in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) *Respiratory Protection Standard 29 CFR 1910.134(g)(4)* procedures for interior structural firefighting, was it appropriate for the chief officer to make entry alone to initiate fire control with the pressurized water extinguisher? Why or why not?

20. The third arriving company was assigned primary and secondary search on the first and second floors. What are the disadvantages of assigning the same company to perform primary and secondary search? If your company was given this assignment, how could you increase the effectiveness of both the primary and secondary search?

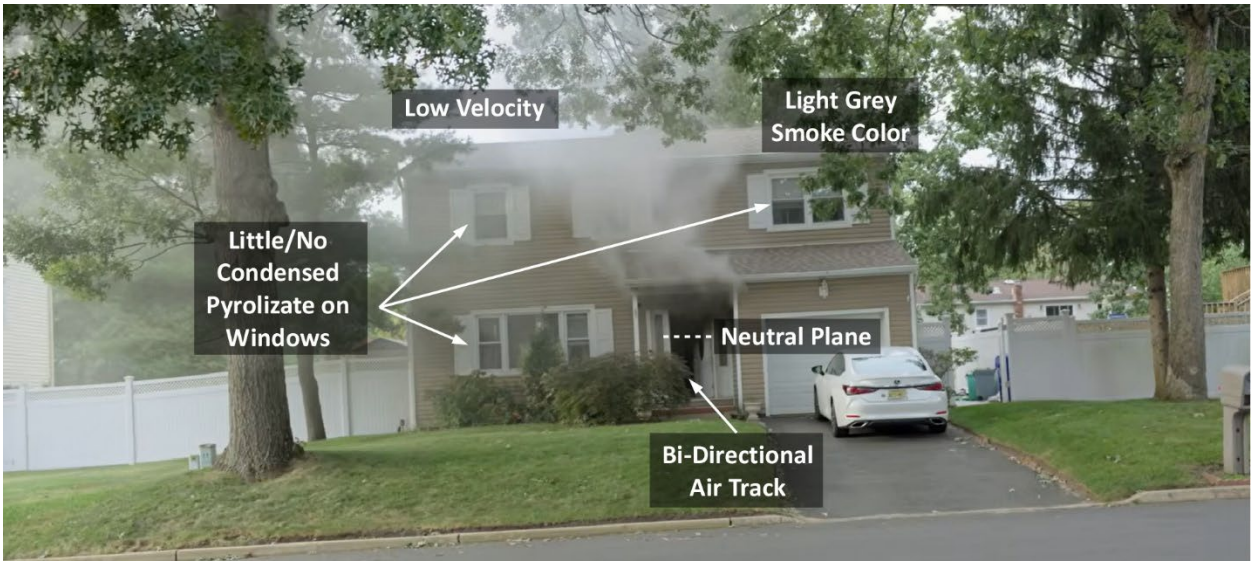
Additional Learning

There are multiple opportunities for additional learning accompanying this 10-Minute Training including reading the fire and common terminology.

Reading the Fire

Assessment of smoke conditions (volume, velocity, density, and color) is important, but consideration of building, environment, smoke, air track, heat, and flame (BE-SAHF) indicators provides a more comprehensive approach to reading the fire. Figure 7 illustrates some of these fire behavior indicators. Discuss the importance of these indicators with the members of your crew and identify the other indicators that may be relevant in this incident.

Figure 7. Reading the Fire at 75 Melody Avenue



Note: Adapted from Jersey Shore Fire Response. (2026). Pre arrival 2 alarm structure fire Brick, New Jersey 9/24/26. https://bit.ly/3TCgSSc.

In the 75 Melody Lane incident, the fire was incipient or early growth stage. However, a ventilation limited fire may present similar fire behavior indicators as an incipient or early growth stage fire. To extend this discussion, review National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) (2025) *Report F2024-03 Career Firefighter Seriously Injured During Search Operations in a Residential Structure Fire – Oregon* and watch *Lessons Learned: Gresham, Oregon Local 1062 – Near Miss* (IAFF, 2026).

NIOSH F 2024-03

IAFF Lessons Learned

Common Terminology

In this incident, the first arriver reported smoke showing from "Division 1" and "Division 2", Side "A". A subsequent arriving chief officer reported smoke showing from" Floor 1, A Side" (Broadcastify, 2026b). There are many fire and rescue agencies that refer to the floors of a building as "divisions". As discussed in previous 10-Minute Trainings, this can create confusion between operating on Floor 2 (described as Division 2) and working for Division 2 (a tactical supervisor managing companies operating on the second floor. Discuss the guidance provided by National Incident Management System (DHS, 2017) and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA, 2020) 1561 Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System and Command Safety with the members of your crew. If your agency uses "divisions" to identify floors, you may not be able to change the terminology, but being aware of the difference between use of this term for location and tactical supervision is critical.

National Incident Management System (NIMS) (DHS, 2017) documentation focuses on large scale Type I, II, or III incidents where the IC has implemented command and general staff functions such as the Operations Section. It provides the following guidance regarding divisions:

> The Operations Section Chief establishes divisions and groups when the number of resources exceeds his or her manageable span of control… Divisions separate physical or geographic areas of operation within the incident area. Divisions can be established according to political or natural terrain boundaries or other prominent geographic features, such as rivers, major roadways, or floors in a multistory building response (p. 88).

This guidance contains two important elements, 1) divisions are geographic (such as a floor or side of a building) and 2) the purpose of establishing divisions is to assist in maintaining span of control, which implies that resources in a division have a tactical supervisor (who works for the IC, Operations Section Chief, or Branch Director) depending on the size and scope of the incident organization.

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) (2020) 1561 Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System and Command Safety provides more clarity, defining the term Division as "a supervisory level established to divide an incident into geographic areas of operations" (3.3.61.2).

Discuss the importance of common and clear terminology as well as the use of the phonetic alphabet (e.g. Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta) rather than letter designations (A, B, C, D) when designating geographic locations such as the sides of a building with the members of your crew.

References

Broadcastify. (2026a). *Ocean County Fire and EMS - Northern — 09/24/2026 05:02 PM - 05:32 PM EDT.* Retrieved October 4, 2026, from https://bit.ly/4rLpPW1.

Broadcastify. (2026a). *Ocean County Fire and EMS - Northern — 09/24/2026 05:32 PM - 06:02 PM EDT.* Retrieved October 4, 2026, from https://bit.ly/3VgRX7v.

Google. (2025a). [Street view 325 S Payson Street, Baltimore, MD]. ©2026 Google. Retrieved October 4, 2026, from https://bit.ly/4zfKh43.

Google. (2025b). [Street view 75 Melody Avenue, Brick Township, NJ]. ©2026 Google. Retrieved October 4, 2026, from https://bit.ly/4ARVvgO.

Google. (2025c). [Street view 75 Melody Avenue, Brick Township, NJ]. ©2026 Google. Retrieved October 4, 2026, from https://bit.ly/4hqvSvN.

Google. (2026a). [Map, 75 Melody Avenue, Brick Township, NJ]. Map data ©2026 Google. Retrieved October 4, 2026, from https://bit.ly/4ypXXJx.

Google. (2026b). [Aerial view 75 Melody Avenue, Brick Township, NJ]. Imagery © Google, Imagery © Airbus Maxar Technologies, Map Data © 2026. Retrieved October 4, 2026, from https://bit.ly/4hvukiE.

International Association of Firefighters (IAFF). (2026). Lessons learned: Gresham, Oregon Local 1062 – near miss. Retrieved October 4, 2026, from https://bit.ly/4rIGc5C

Jersey Shore Fire Response. (2026). Pre arrival 2 alarm structure fire Brick, New Jersey 9/24/26. Retrieved October 3, 2026, from https://bit.ly/3TCgSSc.

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). (2020). *1561 Standard on emergency services incident management system and command safety.* Quincy, MA: Author.

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). (2025). *Report F2024-03 Career firefighter seriously injured during search operations in a residential structure fire – Oregon.* Retrieved October 4, 2026, from https://bit.ly/4ASUKUE.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1910.134 - Respiratory Protection. Retrieved October 4, 2026, from https://bit.ly/4xYehjy.

OpenAI. (2026). *ChatGPT 5.5* [Large language model]. Retrieved September 19, 2026, from https://chat.openai.com/chat.

United States Department of Homeland Security. (2017). *National incident management system* (3rd ed). Retrieved October 4, 2026, from https://bit.ly/4yrpkD1.

Weather Underground. (2026). *Brick, NJ weather history* [historical weather September 24, 2026]. Retrieved October 3, 2026, from https://bit.ly/4hCRHqH.

Build command competence through weekly practice.

Receive a link to each new 10-Minute Training tactical decision game by email.

Click here or scan the QR code to subscribe.