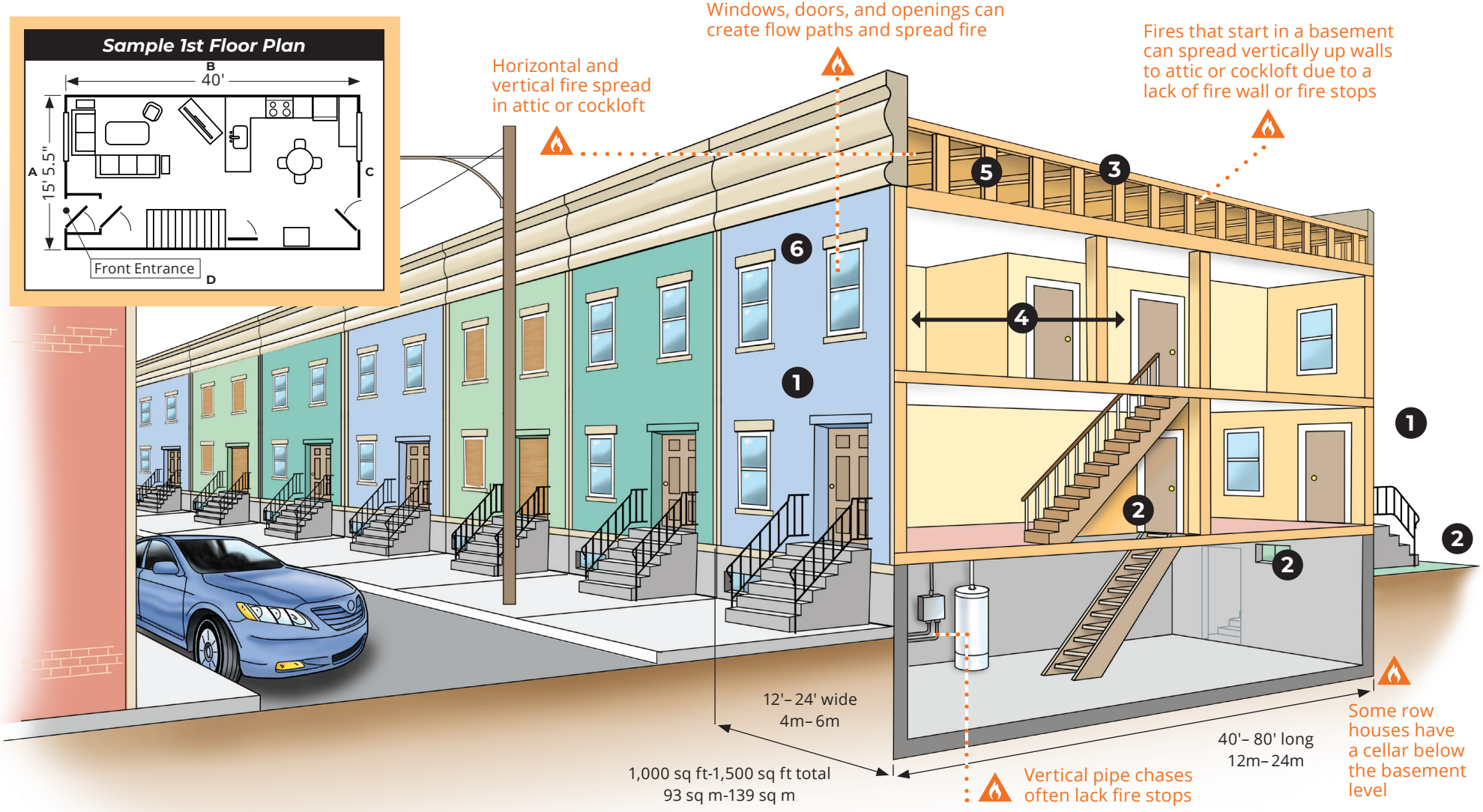
ROW HOUSE FIREFIGHTING TACTICS



FIREFIGHTERS STAY SAFE
FOLLOW THESE 6 TACTICS

1 If interior unit, size-up Sides A and C; locate fire and extent; send resources to Side C

2 Hoseline deployment:

- Fight fire on the level of the fire (exterior attack may be most effective initially)
- 1st line to fire floor
- Protect search
- Basement window or door
- Side C through alley or adjoining house
- Backup hoseline ready
- Use cellar nozzle to get water into below grade areas
- Use piercing or cockloft nozzle to get water into void spaces

3 Coordinate ventilation with fire attack

4 Send resources inside to Exposure B and D

5 Send resources and charged hoseline to attic or cockloft to check for extension

6 Position ground ladders to all upper floor windows; use caution around utility wires

Note: Numbered tactics are not prioritized.

ROW HOUSE INFO & FEATURES

A TYPICAL ROW HOUSE



Photo courtesy of Christopher Naum

- 1 to 4 story residential house with a basement or cellar
- Constructed in a row, often running the length of a block with 30–45 occupancies
- Potentially occupied by multiple people
- Attached to houses on both sides, with separating fire wall
- Located on a narrow street
- Accessible only from a front and rear door

TYPICAL FEATURES

EXTERIOR ROW HOUSE

NARROW WINDOWS

FRONT STOOP (STEPS)
leads to street

2ND & 3RD FLOOR 'BAY'
3 or more windows that extend from the structure

ORNATE CORNICES

SINGLE SLOPING ROOF
modest ornate wood or brick cornice

INTERIOR ROW HOUSE

SINGLE RUN, STEEP STAIRS

LONG, NARROW HALLWAYS

WALKOUT BASEMENT

BASEMENT and/or CELLAR
used for storage

CELLAR
only accessible from the basement

CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS

BALLOON
frame construction

BUILDING PERIOD
late 1800s to early 1900s

BRICK EXTERIOR WALLS

SOLID WOOD BEAM
floor joists and roof rafters

PLASTER and LATH
over wood framing

TYPE III CONSTRUCTION

Conduct a community risk assessment to understand unique features of row houses in your jurisdiction. Row house modernization efforts may mean the exterior is refaced and interior has a different floor plan. Materials used for modernization or new row house construction may burn more quickly.



"Don't underestimate the danger to firefighters when fighting a row house fire. Access to the rear of the property is a major challenge. Basement and cellar fires in row houses have resulted in many line of duty deaths. You must be diligent and prepare as though you're going to a fire each time you report for duty."

Assistant Chief Harry Bannan
Philadelphia Fire Department, Platoon D

OTHER RESOURCES

NIOSH investigations of deaths involving row house fires:

- cdc.gov/niosh/fire/reports/face201618.html
- cdc.gov/niosh/fire/reports/face201425.html
- cdc.gov/niosh/fire/reports/face201424.html

UL Firefighter Safety Research Institute video on basement fires:

- https://ulfirefightersafety.org/basement-fires.html

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