

## After Action Review: 4760 E. Evans



**Date: 4/1/16 Time: 1658 Incident Number: 16-0033735**

**Address: 4760 E. Evans (I-25 and Evans)**

### Summary

Numerous calls for a large building fire in the area of I-25 and Evans. Upon arrival Engine 24 and T19 reported heavy fire conditions throughout the building and a defensive strategy was declared. The building is a vacant three story motel with fencing around the perimeter which was cut and removed by first arriving crews. Two exposure buildings, one on the alpha side and one on the bravo side, were quickly addressed by DFD crews and kept from sustaining further damage. At least two major building collapses – one on the bravo side and one on delta side kept crews at bay. Defensive strategy was maintained throughout with five aerial master streams at work and numerous Blitz-fire monitors and hand-lines in use. The entire third floor of the motel eventually burned completely off with concrete slab ceilings limiting the spread of fire downward for floors one and two for the largest arm of the building.

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## **Risk vs Benefit**

Large vacant motel with heavy fire throughout. Defensive strategy declared.

## **Units Initially Dispatched**

E24, E05, E22, T16, T19, TR-22, HM-1, R-01, D03, D04, OPS-2

## **First Arriving Unit**

E24 and T19

## **Additional Units Requested**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Alarm assignment requested by IC (D03)**

E16, E19, E15, TR-15, TR-23, D07

E12, E15, E23, TR-1 added after the 2<sup>nd</sup> was declared

## **Initial Assignments**

**IC:** D03

**RIT:** R-01

**Safety Officer:** OPS-2

**Bravo Division:** Chief 4

**Charlie Division:** Chief 7

**Delta Division:** Deputy 1

## **Initial Strategy**

Defensive

## **Initial Supply Line**

E24 began defensive operations on the Delta side with E-05 completing the water supply.

## **Was the building laddered**

No

## **Building Size**

Large vacant motel covering a full city block was actually two buildings perpendicular to each other with heavy fire involvement to both.

## **Type**

Commercial

## **Occupancy**

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Vacant

## **Stories**

3

## **Involvement Upon Arrival**

Third floor completely involved in both buildings.

## **Communications**

TAC-3, TAC3 Alpha and face-to-face.

## **Special Challenges**

- Fencing surrounding the building had to be removed by initial arriving crews.
- Time of day – evening rush hour – led to traffic congestion and response issues around the Evans and I-25 area.
- Two significant building collapses presented crews with an unstable building and further collapse hazards.
- Heavy initial radio traffic led to the use of TAC-3 Alpha for communication to the Bravo and Charlie Divisions by OPS-2.

## **Hazards and Safety Issues**

- Two significant wall collapses.
- Active fire on Charlie side of building that was challenging to control due to access issues. This fire was eventually extinguished by filling the void with water that the fire was burning in.
- Large open area on Charlie side led to knee-deep standing water with fall hazards.
- Free-standing wall on Charlie/Delta corner was initially thought to be a collapse hazard.
- Building was untenable due to deteriorating conditions the fire placed on the structure.
- Building was surrounded by overhead power lines that were carefully navigated by aerial crews.

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## **Evaluation and Summary**

- 1. Tactical Priorities**
- 2. Positive Outcomes**
- 3. Additional Considerations**
- 4. Recommendations**
- 5. Safety Considerations**

### **Tactical Priorities**

- Defensive operations with special considerations given to the two exposure buildings that were near the fire building.
  - Alpha Exposure was a one story building housing numerous businesses.
  - Bravo Exposure was a 2-3 story building that was vacant, locked and secured.

### **Positive Outcomes**

- Initial water supply by E24 with two supply lines and good rig placement to supply T16.
- Due to pre-planning, E24 knew hydrant placement ahead of time and had already pre-determined this building to be unsafe for Offensive fire operations and thus set the stage for a defensive attack.
- Excellent use of aerials with 5 straight sticks and tower ladders being placed on all four sides of the building for heavy water application. T16 used a horizontal method of attack with the aerial apparatus master stream that was very effective in extinguishing fire on the main fire building. T19 had excellent initial rig placement by placing the apparatus near exposure buildings for water application. T19 was able to apply water to the far end of the Charlie building to prevent fire spread to the Bravo exposure. T19 members, from this aerial view, also alerted command to smoke on the roof of the Alpha exposure which led to a second look inside for possible fire extension by E19. This exposure already had pre-control overhaul completed by E24 after the Bravo wall collapse.
- There were two exposure buildings that needed quick attention initially and throughout the incident and because of this consideration they sustained little or no damage from fire involvement.
- Many Blitz-Fire monitors were quickly deployed.
- Quick recognition of potential exposure involvement on the Alpha side from wall collapse led to pre-control overhaul of this one-story building and also to water application via a 2-1/2" to the alley of burning debris between the two buildings.
- Utilization of 5" Engine Companies – Engine 3 supplying TR-15 and E12 supplying TR-23 via 5" hose.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> alarm assignment called for early by IC as well as additional rigs.

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- PAR called for and completed after two wall collapses and after all rigs were accounted for by the IC.
- Command Staff – namely the Deputy Chief, due to the level of fire involvement and need for resources, was put to work as the Delta Division Supervisor as well as the Operations Division Chief performing a 360 and providing valuable input on conditions at hand.

### **Additional Considerations**

- Initial radio traffic was heavy and the Bravo and Charlie Divisions were moved to TAC-3 Alpha. This could have happened sooner as well as possibly moving the Delta operations to another tactical channel.
- The Delta wall collapse was not initially articulated over the radio to the IC. This is crucial information that needs to be given to the IC immediately because it will most certainly change the direction of firefighting efforts from a command level.
- Although the fact that this was a defensive fire was well articulated over the radio, better consideration could have been given to re-iterating collapse zone hazards and a reminder for all companies to remain clear of potential falling wall hazards.
- OPS-2 noted one company in particular operating too close to a free standing wall and they were moved out of a potential collapse zone. This move was done in coordinated effort with the Delta Division Supervisor.
- IC should have considered a command channel for non-essential radio traffic. There were times during this incident that the IC was bogged down with face-to-face transmissions and radio traffic that was not vital to the firefighting efforts. Another Chief Officer or a member of Support Staff could have been utilized to help with radio management.
- Some Officers interviewed stated they were not sure who they were working for at certain times during the incident. Consideration should be given when assigning fire companies to a supervisor that both the supervising officer and the company officer are aware of the assignment and also the task that has been assigned.
- Water was not an issue in terms of supply but consideration might have been given to reach out to Denver Water for notification of a large fire and the possibility of boosting water pressure to the area.

### **Recommendations**

- Use of NIMS terminology should be adhered to. Charlie Division instead of Charlie side as an example from this incident.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> alarm additions. Command should consider another ‘size-up’ for additional companies responding. This will paint a picture of conditions they are coming in to as well as help them navigate streets and determine additional water supply options if necessary.
- Clarity given by IC when assigning companies to a particular location as to who they are working for and what their assignment is.

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- If at all possible, every truck/tower that is flowing water should have two engines assigned to it. One engine working on the hydrant supplying an Engine at the rear of the truck. This configuration will maximize the amount of water to the master stream.
- Water priority should be given to master streams and if need be shut down Blitz-fires and 2-1/2" hand-lines to achieve this.
- Blitz-Fire monitors. Although an effective tool that is easy to set up, consideration should be given to the use of ground monitors that can deliver double the gallons per minute and are considered a true master stream.
- Engine Companies need to carry the necessary equipment to supply three supply lines to a tower/truck company master stream. This includes all of the necessary adapters to make the connections seamless and without delay.

### **Safety Considerations**

- There were two major building collapses at this incident due to the heavy fire load weakening the structure. During a 360 safety survey of the building, OPS-2 noted crews working in an area that was within a collapse zone hazard. These crews were re-positioned. In the future, Division Supervisors and Company Officers need to be on high alert to collapse risk and place companies that are working in an area that is safe from falling debris should a collapse occur.

### **Summary**

- Denver Firefighters responded to and quickly contained a large vacant building fire that was near full fire involvement from the outset. There were no injuries noted even though two portions of this building collapsed while crews were on scene. At times chaotic, Chief Officers, Fire Officers and their crews used great forward thinking and determination put in motion efforts that provided large volumes of water in the right locations to provide containment and extinguishment to a very large and challenging building.