

10025 East Girard Avenue



Date: December 25th, 2017 Time: 11:53 A.M. Incident Number: 17-0138430
Address: 10025 E. Girard Ave.

Overview:

Christmas Day, December 25th started with an apartment fire in a two-story residential apartment building, Unit 431 Building 9. The fire originated in the 2nd floor apartment. The calling party, a female who lived in the complex, gave a good description of the building and location of the fire and our Dispatch team did an excellent job of interviewing her for pertinent details to pass along to our fire companies. Smoke was reported 'in the air' by responding companies as the fire was self-venting from two windows on the 2nd floor.

Engine-22, having pre-planned the apartment complex, knew the hydrant they needed based on building location and upon arrival the crew went to work on the plug with the intent of utilizing a 'courtyard stretch' for fire-attack as the fire building was some distance away. Upon arrival at the fire apartment, Tower-22, having taken command, attempted to begin a primary search on the 2nd floor but was met by high heat and flames. E-22 utilized a **'Quick Knock'** on the fire that was presenting from the 2nd floor window. The quick knock was done from ground level and met its desired intent as it darkened the fire down so crews could enter the apartment for searches.

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Having encountered this building in the past with fires, Chief 3, now in command, was cognizant of the fact that exposures were a priority and getting crews inside each apartment to perform pre-control overhaul was a priority to prevent the fire from extending throughout the building. Vertical roof ventilation was performed by Rescue-1 with the help of T-19 and greatly aided in the stop of further fire spread.

Due to the aggressive efforts of the first arriving companies, this fire was contained to one apartment with no extension beyond, even though a scuttle hatch was found open to the attic in the fire apartment. The entire building was evacuated by T-19 and HM-1. There were no injuries to civilians or firefighters.

Risk vs Benefit:

Large 2-story apartment complex with fire in a corner apartment on the South-East side of building 9 Unit 431.

Units Initially Dispatched:

E-22, E-24, E-18, E-19 (RIT), Tr-22, T-19, R-1, HM-1, D03, D04, OPS-2, Arson 11 and 12

First Arriving Unit(s):

E-22, Tr-22

Additional Units Requested:

None

Initial Assignments:

IC: Tr-22 then D03

RIT: E19

Safety Officer: OPS-2

Initial Strategy:

Offensive Fire Attack

Initial Supply Line:

E-22 going to work on hydrant with 5" supply hose.

Attack Line(s):

E-22 attack line was a 2" backpack line off a 2-1/2" courtyard stretch.

Back-up Line:

E-24 stretched a 2-1/2" backup line that was used on exposures and fire that was auto-exposing from the fire apartment window.

Was the building laddered: Yes

2 Means of egress: No

Building Size, Type, Number of Stories, and Occupancy:

Large 2-story residential apartment complex.

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Involvement Upon Arrival and Initial Location of Fire:

Fire showing from the 2nd floor of a two-story apartment

Communications:

TAC-3, face to face

Special Challenges, Hazards, and Safety Issues:

- Advanced fire upon arrival
- Open scuttle hatch in fire apartment (not immediately known)
- Smoke showing from eaves of entire building
- High heat preventing an immediate search of fire apartment
- Attic space that had limited fire stops and had great potential for fire spread

Evaluation and Summary

Goal

Aggressive, offensive fire attack confining the fire to the apartment of origin while coordinating primary searches, exposure control and building evacuations.

What went well:

- Pre-plans of building combined with prior fire knowledge led to excellent overall strategy and put in place the strategy for a successful offensive fire attack
- First due engines securing water supply nearest fire apartment
- 'Quick Knock' used to darken fire and lessen heat so crews could enter apartment
- Successfully utilizing 'Courtyard' stretch by both first due engine companies
- Aggressive pre-control overhaul of exposure apartments to expose and stop spread of fire
- Vertical roof ventilation aided in fire apartment conditions and worked to stop spread of fire throughout building

What could have gone better:

- Communication while on air continues to be marginal at best
 - Members should keep fresh batteries in SCOTT voice amps
 - Members should keep radio volume turned down to avoid 'squelch' while in tight quarters
- Members working on the fire-ground should wear fire gloves and safety glasses to avoid injury
- When roof operations are taking place, 2 means of egress need to be in place for members above the fire

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Recommendations

Continual refinement and training of the 'Courtyard' stretch and the 'Quick Knock' tactic. These tactics both led to a successful fire attack and made for an apartment fire that was contained to one unit.

Summary

This fire incident ran as smoothly as possible due to pre-planning by arriving crews and the use of new fire-ground technologies. The 'Quick Knock' is a relatively new tactic in use by DFD, and the 'Courtyard' stretch, although not new, is a tactic that all engine companies should have in their arsenal of weapons.

The Incident Commander, well versed in this particular building layout, was aggressive in ordering searches, evacuations, pre-control overhaul, and vertical ventilation. These actions led to a contained fire that by all accounts should have run the building based on an open scuttle and open attic construction.

