

After Action Review: 1429 S. Ulster St.



Date: April 11, 2018 Time: 17:15 Incident Number: 18-037716

Address: 1429 S. Ulster St

Overview:

The initial call to 911 was from a party that identified themselves as the owner of 1429 S. Ulster. The caller stated the wind blew over a smoker on the porch and started the patio furniture on fire. High winds contributed to fire spread and intensity. This call came in during rush hour and navigating traffic was a challenge for responding companies. T19 was the first truck on scene and took command reporting heavy smoke showing from the Charlie side. Due to the volume of smoke and the size of the structure involved a second alarm assignment was called for approximately 6 minutes after the first companies arrived. Chief 4 arrived shortly after the second alarm was called for and assumed command with Chief 3 arriving less than 1 minute later and was assigned to the Charlie Division. Three of the units were heavily involved with fire at this time. An aggressive interior attack was attempted from the Alpha side into 2 of the 3 units. E18 had a hose line burned through and burst prior to entering and a 2nd handline from E19 ruptured during the initial attack. The IC made the decision to contain the fire by

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assigning companies to the Bravo, Charlie, and Delta sides while attempting an aggressive interior attack from the Alpha side. High winds pushed this fire to the trees and fence on the Charlie side. Access to the complex was limited from the address side. Aurora and South Metro were dispatched by their call takers and responded with an engine and chief each and accessed the fire ground from the neighborhood on the Charlie side. Charlie Division utilized these crews to assist in knocking down the fire on the exterior of the Charlie side. This attack was coordinated with the IC as companies were performing an interior attack. Approximately 22 minutes after the arrival of the first company, part of the roof collapsed over 1 of the units. The IC asked dispatch to sound the backout tone and ordered companies out of the building. A PAR was conducted, the scene reassessed, and an aggressive defensive posture was taken to darken down the fire. Interior fire fighting continued once the fire was knocked down. It took approximately 1 hour for crews to bring this fire under control.

Risk vs Benefit:

Large amount of fire affecting multiple units of an apartment complex. Status of all occupants was unknown. This was a high-risk operation due to the amount of fire and size of the structure. The benefits were containing this to the units already involved and saving property.

Units Initially Dispatched:

Engines: 18, 19, 5

Trucks/Towers: 19, 22, 15

Rescue 2

Chiefs: 4, 3

Ops 2

First Arriving Unit(s):

Truck 19, Engine 18, Tower 22

Additional Units Requested:

2nd alarm assignment was requested but more than a 2nd alarm assignment was dispatched. All companies were utilized.

Engines: 3, 13, 14, 15, 21, 24, 22

Trucks/Towers: 8, 16, 19

Chief: 2, 7

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Other: Div. 3, Div. 5, PIO, Air/light, Ops 4

Initial Assignments:

IC: Truck 19/D04 **RIT:** T08 Alpha side, AFD E11/DFD E15 Charlie side

Safety Officer: OPS2

Engine 19: Interior Charlie side exposure attack **Truck 19:** Search

Engine 18: Interior attack **Tower 22:** Search

Engine 5: Backup

Chief 3: Charlie Division

Chief 7: Delta Division

Ops 4: Bravo Division

Initial Strategy:

Offensive attack on the Alpha side along with exterior handlines on the Charlie side

Initial Supply Line:

Number and Size of Lines: Engine 18 one 3" line **Supply Engine:** Engine 19 two 3" lines

Humat: Yes

Attack Line(s):

Multiple lines, multiple sizes

Back-up Line:

2 ½" inch by E5 pulled inside and one pulled from E18

Was the building laddered: Yes-multiple ladders **2 Means of egress:** Yes

Building Size, Type, Number of Stories, Occupancy:

This building contained 5 two story units with garages and garden level basements. This was light weight construction.

Involvement Upon Arrival and Initial Location of Fire:

3 of 5 units heavily involved upon arrival on the Charlie side

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Communications:

Tactical Channel-TAC4, Command Channel-TAC4 Bravo

Special Challenges, Hazards, and Safety Issues:

Burst attack line by Engine 19 on Charlie side. Burst/burned through primary attack line from E18 on Alpha side. Collapse of roof on unit 1433 S. Ulster.

Limited access to the complex and limited areas for rigs to position.

Command Structure:

Initial resources were assigned as single resources with the Charlie Division being the first division created. Later Bravo and Delta Divisions were established.

Evaluation and Summary

Tactical Priorities:

- Life safety for both the residents and firefighters.
- Fire containment and extinguishment.
- Efforts focused on containing this fire on all sides, then preservation of property through extinguishment.

Positive Accomplishments:

- Only 1 reported civilian or firefighter injury. The injury was to a firefighter who twisted his ankle when he stepped on a hose exiting the structure.
- 2 of the 5 units had relatively little damage and significant amount of the contents of one of the 3 units involved initially was salvageable.
- The occupants of the 3rd unit were concerned about their 2 cats and after multiple searches the cats were found and returned to their owners.
- Companies were able to overcome several obstacles such as burst attack lines, limited access, and limited water supply.

Additional Considerations:

- The DFD has protocols outlining the duties and actions of our RIT Team. In addition, other agencies do not have the ability to monitor our radio channels and lack familiarity of our members and equipment. Only DFD companies should be used as RIT teams.
- Using the NIMS system from the start of an incident is imperative, especially in larger incidents. Span of control should be 3 to 5 especially in fast moving, complex incidents.
- Radio traffic will become an issue on most all major incidents. Command officers should utilize the Command Channel which is position 7 on our radios.

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- Division supervisors need to have a strong command presence within their Division. Face to face conversations should be utilized as much as possible within Divisions. PARs will be completed by division and/or group supervisors and inform command once completed. Example: “Search Group is on the 8th floor and has a PAR”
- Division and Group Supervisors should use the correct NIMS terminology. The Delta Division was referring to himself as “D2”; this could be easily confused with Division 2.
- One of the initial attack lines was a 1 ¾” hand line. Volume of fire and smoke and size of the building may be indications that a 2 ½” line might be appropriate. Upon further discussion the 1 ¾” line was a conscious decision that took into consideration mobility and speed. The first arriving companies did not have fire or smoke showing from the Alpha side.
- This was dispatched as a single-family residence. Listening to the tapes, the caller referred to themselves as the homeowner and stated “the house” or “neighboring home” several times. Near the end of the conversation with dispatch, the dispatcher did confirm this was a multi-family residence; however, it was still dispatched as a single-family.
- When companies are ordered to backout, all engineers should sound their airhorn according to protocol. Airhorns were not sounded on the initial back out. Some companies did not hear the backout radio traffic and attempted to enter the structure causing a second back out tone to be ordered.
- Apparatus spotting behind a truck/tower should not be spotted so close that ladders cannot be removed.
- Level 2 staging should have been established at this fire.

Areas for Improvement/Recommendations:

- Chief and company officers should train frequently on the use of NIMS. As a Department, continuing education should be conducted on NIMS as well strategy and tactics.
- Incident Commanders need to focus on strategic priorities and ensure tactical benchmarks are met. An example in a high-rise fire would be to order Chief 2 to the fire floor; they will be Division 4 and they are to attack the fire and conduct a search of the 4th floor. The IC is then concentrating on the “what” as in what he/she wants from his/her supervisors, not the “how.” The IC should then follow up with CAN reports from the supervisor, ensuring the tactical benchmarks are met.
- The IC should only leave the command post if a 360 survey needs to be completed and there is no one else to complete this task. The Incident Commander’s support staff expects the IC to be at the command post for face to face communications. Tactical progress can be monitored by CAN reports from division and group supervisors.

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- Chief and company officers need to stay familiar with the technology available, such as the capacities of our radios and Tablet Command. Within Tablet Command is the ability to conduct a PAR and check off units as they report. Tablet Command was utilized to track companies during the PAR; however, it is not widely known that Tablet Command has a PAR feature which allows the IC to check off units as the PAR is completed. Additional training on Tablet Command will be starting for chief officers on Saturday, June 16th in the form of a Webinar from the Tablet Command representative. There were several other factors that hindered a rapid PAR assessment. The Tablet Command PAR feature is a tool members should be familiar with, but would not have sped up the process in this case.
- All members should review **SOG 2110.03**, specifically **Section VII concerning PARs**.
- Understanding the radio lineup and utilizing the Command Channel.
- District Chiefs should make a point to familiarize officers with the Tablet Command program and allow members to practice with the program and set up an incident such as this, where the first arriving chief is well behind the first arriving companies. While the Tablet Command program is only available on the Chief's IPAD at this time, familiarizing officers with the program will help Captains when they act as Chief and reinforce the NIMS system for all officers. 5 companies had arrived and went to work, as well as a second alarm called for, prior to the first chief arriving.
- A better size up should be given once the IC takes command. Chief 4 took Command and met Truck 19 for a face to face, but never gave a more detailed size up for responding companies. The conditions had changed drastically by the time Chief 4 took command and command should have re-painted the picture and included a level of staging, the staging area, and the strategy that would be taken, i.e.: offensive on which units. With the difficulty of access, limited hydrants, and access, Chief 4 needed a staging area and needed to control incoming companies. A better size up could have done this.
- The earlier assignment of Divisions and Groups would have enabled the IC to effectively manage the incident and consequently would have made the completion of the PAR simpler and smoother. Once a second was made, both the Truck 19 Officer and Chief 4 should have assigned a Bravo, Charlie, and Delta Division immediately.
- Dispatch added Engine 22 and Engine 3 to this fire without notifying command.
- Continued training on establishing water supply. Engine companies must recognize the need for potential "big water" and ensure that 2 lines are laid from the hydrant while laying in. Every plug that is utilized shall have an engine on that plug supplying water to the attack Engine. 5" hose should not be "laid in" unless the coordination has been conducted with another Engine company to go to their hydrant and pump to them.

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Safety Considerations:

- The fire on the Charlie side engulfed the shut offs for the utilities. Xcel Gas responded quickly while Xcel Electric was delayed. Several of the gas meters were destroyed by the fire, as well as the electrical panels. Xcel Electric stated they had cut power to all but the end units which had minimal damage. Once given the all clear by Xcel, companies continued overhaul and hit an exposed power line with their hose stream which arched. Electric to the entire structure was then ordered to be cut to all units.

Summary:

This was a challenging fire which was driven by wind, grew rapidly, and was well advanced by the time the first companies arrived. The loss of property was minimized by containing it to the units involved upon arrival. Coordinating the attack on the Charlie side with the interior attack on the Alpha side aided in gaining control of this fire and controlling further fire spread.

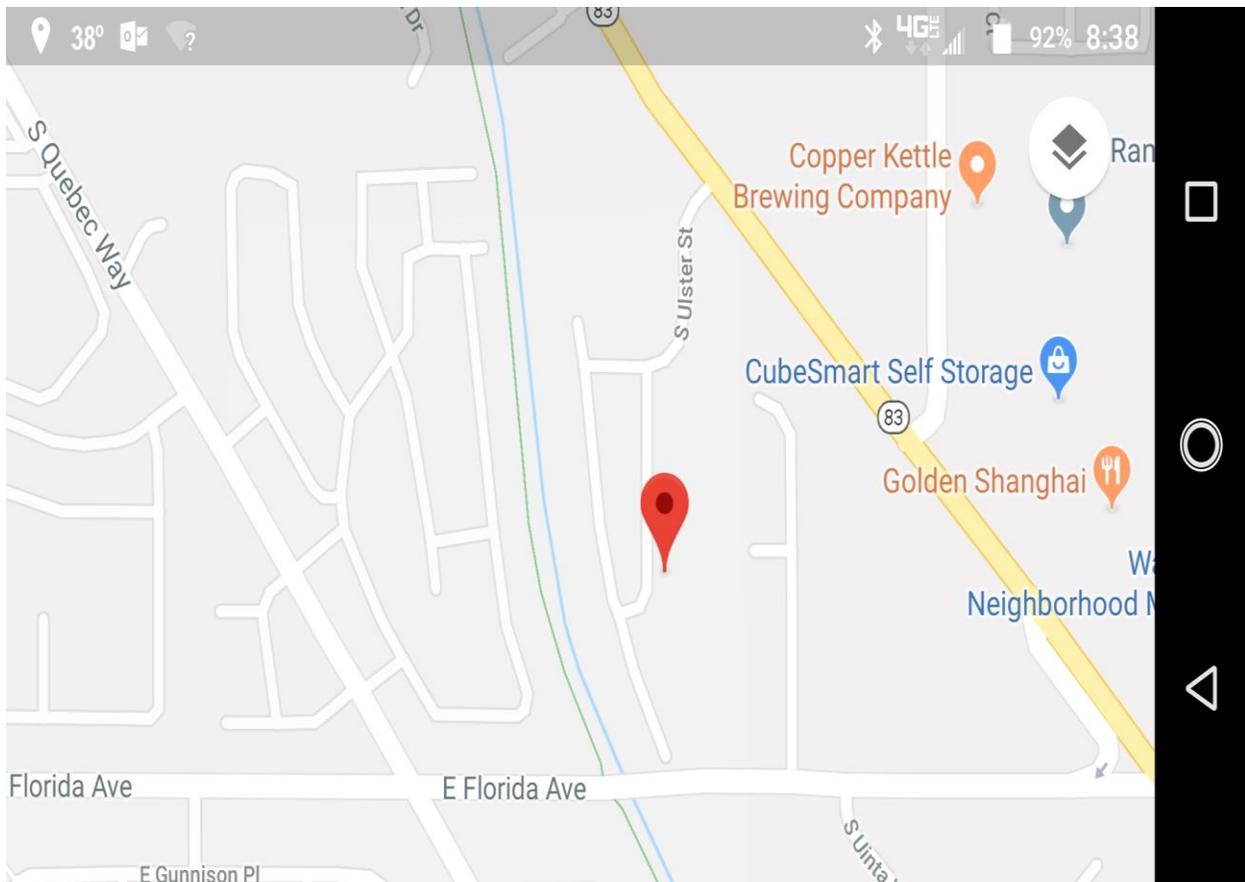
There were no fatalities or civilian injuries, and only a minor firefighter injury.

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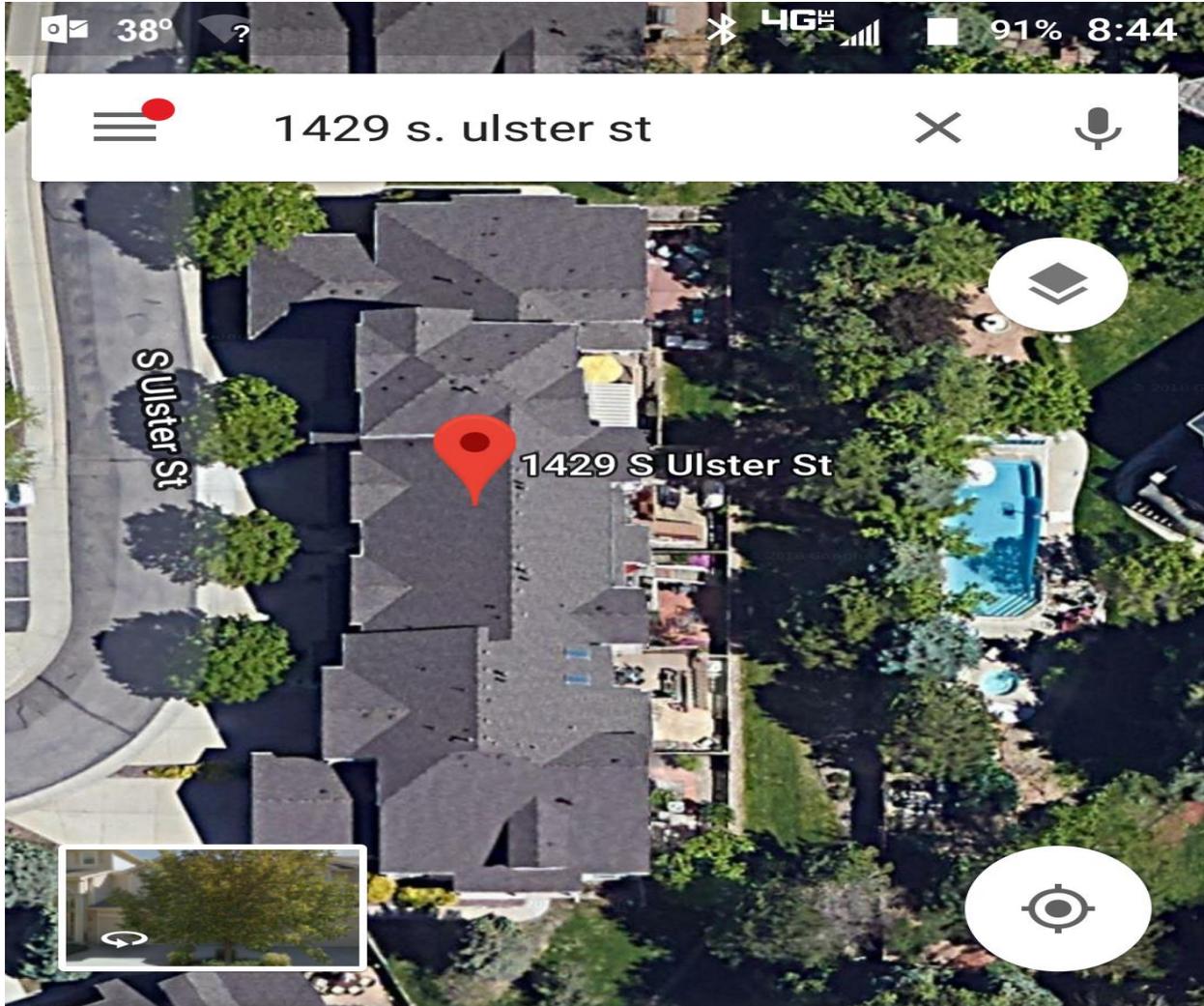


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📍 MORE INFO

📍 DIRECTIONS



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