



Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service

POST INCIDENT ANALYSIS

10334 Royal Woods Court
Gaithersburg, Md.

July 15, 2007



Submitted by
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Introduction

Sunday July 15, 2007 - At 12:35 hours Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service was dispatched to 10334 Royal Woods Ct. Gaithersburg, Md. for a working fire in a townhouse. Units arrived on the scene to find fire showing from side A of two, three story middle of the row townhouses. Fire was coming from the 2nd floor deck extending into the house involving the 3rd floor and attic of both townhouses. The wind was blowing at 5-10 MPH from the North and the temperature was 93 degrees. A civilian, the occupant of the home suffered minor 1st degree burns of the forehead and forearm attempting to extinguish the fire. The civilian was taken to Shady Grove Hospital by M319, treated and released. A LFRD member from Co.3 suffered minor injury during overhaul. Her front tooth was broken after being struck by moving the bed set off the 2nd floor. This firefighter was also taken to Shady Grove Hospital for follow up care. Eight occupants were displaced from this fire and Red Cross was called to assist them. There was \$750,000 dollars damage to the structure and \$250,000 damage to contents. The cause was determined by the FM's to be caused by overloading a deep fat fryer on the deck to close to the exterior siding.

Building Structure/Site Layout

- The structure was a three level townhouse with a garage.
- Construction is a Type 5 wood frame platform with a center courtyard entrance.
- Floor joist are engineered wooden I beams.
- Personnel and apparatus did not encounter any problems in gaining access through the garage. The homeowner was at home and left the front door open.
- The parking lot was narrow and not a lot of room for apparatus.

Communications

- The Montgomery County dispatcher on 7C (7 Charlie) did verbally provide on scene information and change of address information.
- Fire ground talk groups where adequate and utilized fully. The second alarm units and assignments from staging were given on 7D (7 Delta). Command Support 1 assisted with monitoring this talk group.
- The F7 Administrative Function Key on the MDC assisted and reduced radio traffic when requesting Utilities, Air Unit, Red Cross and Ride-On Busses.

On Scene Operations

- Structural integrity of the townhouse based on fire conditions on arrival, was somewhat compromised. The fire was coming from the 2nd floor deck with extension to the 3rd floor and attic of both adjacent townhouses.
- Command was identified on arrival by BC5 and maintained throughout the incident.
- Size up decisions by command on arrival was to attack the fire from the outside with AT8 and Blitz Fire to prevent further extension and then go in with crews to mop up.
- The Rapid Intervention Dispatch and the 2nd alarm were added by Battalion Chief 5 just prior to arrival, having the 2nd alarm stage on Watkins Mill Road.
- The initial strategy/action plan was life safety. The occupant of the house came to Command Post and reported everyone was out. RS291 confirmed primary was complete. Property conservation was the next priority having units in position to extinguish the fire and coordinate the attack.
- Crews executed tactics very effectively.
- Additional training needs were identified and communicated in the HOT wash. Communication between units had to be done verbally because of radio traffic. This seems to be an on going problem. Discussion on fire attack in light weight construction was also addressed. And the topic of risk benefit analysis in light weight construction was also discussed.
- Standard Operating Procedures were used; they were adequate. The SOP was followed with a bumpy start but strong command and coordination of the crews put the fire out.
- On this fire, defensive /offensive decisions were made by command to attack the bulk of the fire from the exterior and then send crews in to open up to check for fire extension.
- The risk analysis was to evacuate the townhouse and apply streams from the exterior with little or no risk to personnel.
- The divisions and groups used where appropriate for the type and complexity of the incident and complex structure layout.
- Apparatus was properly positioned with good water supply with no access to side B, side D or side C of the building.
- Attack line selections of the initial attack lines were appropriate which included two Blitz Fires and good thinking on behalf of all crew members.
- Ventilation operations using natural ventilation of windows and doors vented structure without using fans. Mechanical ventilation was not necessary.
- Salvage operations were conducted using tarps and chutes. This prevented water damage to a significant amount of property in exposures B and D.

- No Mutual Aid companies were utilized in this operation.
- Water supply was adequate. There are hydrants in close proximity to Sides A, Units on hydrants used heavy water hookups fully utilizing water supply.

Staging

- The second alarm staging location was on Watkins Mill Rd.
- Site Access was close to scene and could handle the apparatus from several directions.

Support Functions

- A Rehab group was established on Side A in the parking lot.
- Fire/Rescue personnel were provided with food and drinks by Canteen 8.
- Crews were relieved by fresh crews on a regular basis.
- There were no equipment or apparatus failures.
- Functions with outside agencies were properly coordinated (i.e. Police, Gas and Power Company,)

Safety Group

- Standby team was established by Medic 298.
- There was one fire/rescue personnel injured. A LFRD member from Co.3 suffered minor injury during overhaul. Her front tooth was broken after being struck when moving the bed set off the 2nd floor.
- All safety SOPs and regulations were enforced.
- There was a Rapid Intervention Dispatch with Truck 31's OIC as RIG Supervisor. RIG was established on Side A in the parking lot next to the Command Post.

Accountability

- 20 minutes into the incident actions were taken to ensure accurate personnel accountability.
- The status of units, Divisions/Groups and support personnel were maintained.
- Personnel provide adequate feedback in the Hot Wash on scene.
- The incident was continuously controlled and monitored by Safety One.

Investigations

- The Origin and Cause of fire was determined by the Investigations Group.
- The main factor contributing ignition and fire spread was determined by the FM's to be caused by overloading a deep fat fryer on the deck too close to the exterior siding. This fire became gas fed by the propane cylinder supplying the fryer.

Lessons Learned

- When controlling utilities (gas, electric and water) ensure that the system is being shut down and not turned back on. In this case, electric was shut off and was turned back on in an attempt to shut down power to all four units; this placed the crews operating in the structure at risk.
- Ensure all personnel wear appropriate PPE while operating on the fireground. PT shorts are not appropriate PPE.
- It's critical to listen to the radio to determine changes in dispatch order and address changes. In this instance the address was changed and the dispatch order was changed several times causing some confusion. In this case units were able to adapt and overcome but could have become problematic.
- A good on scene report from the Medic Unit allowed command to call for additional resources early.
- When positioning apparatus consider impact on incoming apparatus. Although a solid water supply was established apparatus positioning created challenges for incoming special services.
- Street maps need revision to reflect hydrant locations. Hydrants were listed in the townhouse maps but not on the street map.

Units on Incident

<u>Dispatch</u>	<u>RIG</u>	<u>2ND ALARM</u>
RS291	RS17	CP1
M298	E311	E131
E291	AT31	AT35
BC3		AT29
E171		M299
E281		T31
E351		C200
C29x1		T3
EMS3		AR33
AT8		E31
FM13		CT8
SAFETY 1		
FM51		
FM59		
C8		
FM60		
BC5		
C17x7		
E81		
EW17		
M319		

