

Post Incident Analysis

6450 Brookes Lane

November 11, 2007



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Post Incident Analysis Brookes Lane

I. Introduction

This house fire was dispatched for 6450 Brookes Lane at 2010 hrs on November 11, 2007, Inc#07-0112623. Upon arrival heavy fire conditions were apparent from side Alpha. E711's on scene report was a structure fully involved. Companies initially operated in a defensive mode and transitioned into an offensive attack after the bulk of the fire was knocked down. Several issues challenged the fire department in this incident; including access, apparatus, and equipment, each will be discussed in detail. This incident is still under investigation and was determined to be approximately \$1 million fire loss.



II. Building Structure / Site Layout

This house is a very large wood frame balloon construction single family dwelling. Attached was an “in-law” suite with carport on side Delta. One of the challenges, was the stairs to the second floor of the “in-law” suite were burned through. Without access from any other area of the house, interior access to the in-law suite was determined to be unsafe on the first floor, so extinguishment in this area was completed by breaching an interior wall of the second floor.

The driveway presented a challenge; two brick columns with gates were present at the entrance to the drive. The driveway in the direction of travel was a greater than a 90 degree turn to enter. E711 damaged their ladder rack entering the driveway hitting

the gate at the entrance. BC702 entered the driveway but no additional apparatus could access the driveway, T706 attempted to make the turn but could not enter. All additional apparatus parked out on Brookes Lane or they positioned in the parking lot of Defense Mapping.

III. Fire Code History

No known history of code violations.

IV. Communications

Radio talk groups were adequate. Communications procedures were followed, the only unit on scene from mutual aid was Fairfax County Rescue Squad 401 and they operated seamlessly. All divisions worked well with each other and command. All division communication was face to face, division to command was via radio and radio etiquette was maintained through out incident.

V. Pre-emergency Planning

No pre-plans were available for this incident.



VI. On Scene Operations

Access to the second floor of the “in-law” suite was cut off due to the stairs burning through as explained earlier. The rear stairs were also burned which required companies entering from the rear to find alternate access to the upper floors. This delayed E710 and T710 in reporting to Division 2 for several minutes. Command was identified with a green light on the buggy as well as via a radio report upon assumption of command. Size up of conditions resulted in the initial engine company operating in a defensive operation utilizing a 2” and 2 ½” attack lines until the bulk of the fire was controlled and then transitioned into an offensive attack.

The strategy was transitioned into an offensive attack after evaluating the structural conditions/ situation prior to entry. Command reinforced to the company officers to maintain situational awareness upon entry. The line placement to Divisions 1 and 2 was accomplished quickly by the crews assigned. This minimized fire growth during the transition. C741, BC703, and C710C were assigned as division supervisors throughout this incident. Their assignments were rotated based on relief and need throughout Division 1, 2 3 or Delta.

As stated earlier, apparatus positioning was a challenge because of the width of the driveway. All equipment, with the exception of that on E711, had to be carried up the 500+’ driveway or carried down through the woods from the Defense Mapping parking lot.

E711 had a limited water tank. E711 only has a 500 gallon water tank which limited their defensive attack until a water supply was established by E706.



VII. Staging

Staging was not utilized, the task force apparatus was brought directly to the scene to relieve working crews and assist with crew rotation.

VIII. Support Functions

Rehab was set-up with A741 doing medical and CAN733 providing refreshments. Both units actually set up beside the command post, even though they could not get their vehicle close to the scene. All units were directed through rehab when relieved from their work assignment. Each crew went through rehab several times this night.

The only outside agency utilized on the scene was the power company. The power lines were burned off of the Delta side of the structure. The lines were hot and arching on the ground on side Delta. Safety 700 and Chief 710 Charlie notified Command and isolated the area to ensure safety until Pepco could remove power from the pole.

IX. Safety Group

An initial standby crew, E706, was assigned by the first engine; a full RIG was assigned when those units arrived on the scene, E750 was assigned as the RIG

supervisor. The RIG was maintained until the IDLH was removed and confirmed by Safety. Safety 700 was assigned as the ISSO. The ISSO spent a great deal of time surveying the structure for changing conditions, hazards and integrity. Wires on side Delta were quickly identified as hazards and the area marked with fire line tape. Trees continued to burn unchecked on Side Delta due to the focus on controlling the house fire. These trees later created hazards as they burned internally for many hours.

X. Accountability

Accountability was maintained through strict division command and control. Division supervisors maintained accountability of personnel under their command throughout. Division accountability was maintained by Command.

XI. Investigations

This incident is still under investigation at this writing.

XII. Lessons Learned

No lessons learned, just reinforced. The first company officer makes or breaks the incident; this incident is a prime example. The Company Officer sized up the incident well, determined the significant volume of fire and operated defensively until this fire could be managed by hand lines.

Had preplans or institutional knowledge of the driveway area existed, E711 could have changed their approach to the scene and directed T706 as well to circle around the block to enter the driveway from the other direction, eliminating the damage to E711 and allowing T706 up the driveway.

XIII. Overall Analysis

Looking into this incident, crews transitioned well from a defensive operation to an offensive attack. Good decisions were made to start off defensively, even realizing that the engine being operated only had a 500 gallon water tank. The size of the house, the limited access to crews, the multifaceted additions which did not completely link one area of the house to another all caused challenges that needed to be overcome. Personnel became frustrated in their pursuit of fire extension as when areas of fire were found, clearly identified, but remained out of reach. However, for all the challenges presented, personnel were able to minimize damage to the areas of origin, avoid injury and mitigate the incident safely.