



Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service

POST INCIDENT ANALYSIS

**9132 Bobwhite Circle
Gaithersburg, Md.**

December 27, 2007



**Submitted by
Battalion Chief Shane Darwick**

Introduction

December 27, 2007 - At 1748 hours Montgomery County Fire/Rescue units responded to 9132 Bobwhite Circle Gaithersburg Md. for a townhouse fire with a report of people trapped. Battalion Chief 705 arrived on the scene and reported a middle of the row townhouse with fire showing from two windows on the second floor side "A", established Bobwhite Command and requested a second alarm to be staged on Emory Grove Road. An aggressive attack was commenced by E708 and AT708 and crews immediately began to search for the trapped victims. Crews quickly searched and reported primary complete and everyone out and accounted for. Red Cross was requested for four people that had been displaced. There was estimated \$250,000 damage to the structure and \$100,000 to the contents.

The investigation focused on the cause being arcing from an electrical outlet. The investigators believe the fire originated in the second floor bedroom room and after interviewing the occupants it was determined to be unintentional.

The temperature at the time of the fire was 34 degrees, skies clear and the wind was blowing at 5 MPH from the North.

Building Structure/Site Layout

The structure is a two story townhouse with a finished basement. This townhouse has 1,564 square feet of living space. It was built in 1974 and is a Type 5 (wood frame) platform construction. Units are separated by a block firewall which extended through the roof.

Personnel and apparatus did not encounter any problems in gaining access through the front door. Homeowner was at home and left front door open upon exiting from the fire. Due to time of day the parking lot was open to apparatus.

Communications

- The Montgomery County dispatcher on 7C (7 Charlie) overall did a good job.
- There was some confusion about dispatched Truck Companies and ended up with an extra truck. AT729 was not due but arrived early on in the incident and was utilized on the exposures and overhaul.
- Fire ground talk groups were adequate and utilized fully. The Second Alarm units and assignments from staging were given on 7D (7 Delta).

On Scene Operations

- Structural integrity of the house, based on fire conditions on arrival, was somewhat compromised. The fire was coming from the front of the house with auto extension into the attic.
- Initial command was identified on arrival by Battalion Chief 705 (BC705) and maintained throughout the incident.
- Size up decisions by command on arrival was to determine if there were any rescues to be made.
- Strategy/action plan was life safety. A standby team was not established due to the possibility of reported people trapped. The occupant of the house came to Command Post and reported everyone was out. E708 and AT708 confirmed primary was complete. RS717 was assigned to do the secondary search and they reported an all clear. Property conservation was the next priority having units in position to extinguish the fire and coordinate the attack.
- Crews executed tactics very effectively positioning attack lines to protect the search E708, AT708, E728, EW717, E729, E753 all had four firefighters which assisted in making an aggressive attack on the fire and at the same time protecting the search. Hose lines were in place and officers could be officers without getting involved in pulling a hose line.
- Standard Operating Procedures were used; and they were adequate.
- On this fire, offensive decisions were made by command to attack the fire and then send crews to open up to check for fire extension in the attic and exposures.
- The strategy/action plan was life safety initially. Incident stabilization was next by confining the fire. Then property conservation became a challenge on the first floor with new Christmas gifts undamaged and preventing them from getting wet. Evidence preservation on the second floor at the point of origin then became a priority for the Investigators.
- The divisions and groups used were appropriate for the type and complexity of the incident. Division 2 was established with E708, E728 AT708 and BC703 as Division 2 Supervisor. RS717 conducted search and assured utilities were controlled. C717C was assigned side C (Charlie). E731 was assigned the Bravo Exposure.

- Apparatus was properly positioned in front (Side A) with good water supply of the building.
- Attack line selections of 2" and 1¾" for the initial attack were appropriately used. Good thinking on behalf of all crew members.
- Ventilation operations using natural ventilation of windows and doors vented structure. Mechanical ventilation was used to supplement as necessary.
- Salvage operations were conducted using tarps on the first floor.
- Water supply was adequate. There is a hydrant in close proximity to Side "A", E728 supplied E708.
- EW717 laid into the scene from the opposite direction but no one supplied it. Until E725 arrived on scene from the second alarm and supplied there line. Units on hydrants used heavy water hookups fully utilizing water supply.

Staging

- The Second alarm staging location was Emory Grove Road.
- Site Access was close to scene and could handle the apparatus from several directions.

Support Functions

- Rehab was established by EMS 703 on Side "A" in the front with A708.
- Fire/Rescue personnel were provided with food and drinks by Canteen 740.
- Crews were relieved by fresh crews throughout overhaul.
- 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 not established due to the possibility of reported people trapped.
- Safety 700 completed a circle check and reported findings to command.
- Safety tape was used around side A during overhaul where crews were throwing contents onto sidewalk in front.

- There were no fire/rescue personnel injured.
- All safety SOPs and regulations were enforced by Safety 700.
- There was a Rapid Intervention Dispatch
- RS729's OIC was assigned as RIG Supervisor E729, T703, M708B crews assembled on side A/B corner and staged equipment and had two members of RS729 throw two additional ladders on side C Division 1 for egress this was cleared by command to make the structure rescue ready.

Accountability

- ECC notified Command we were 15 minutes into the incident and Command ensured actions were taken for accurate personnel accountability by checking with Division 2 operating within the structure what task were being performed and which units were with him.
- The status of units, Divisions/Groups and support personnel were maintained throughout the incident.
- The incident was continuously controlled and monitored by Command and Safety 700.

Investigations

- The cause of fire was determined by the Investigations Group and focused on electrical arcing from an outlet and the origin was determined to be in the bedroom.
- FM 4 was the Investigations Group Supervisor and had two divisions, Investigations and Code Enforcement under his command.

Lessons Learned

- When positioning apparatus consider impact on incoming apparatus. Later arriving units had trouble getting close to the scene.
- Although a solid water supply was established E729 should come the same way as EW717 to pick up the water supply to avoid being blocked out by apparatus coming from other directions. EW717 was supplied by E725 on the second alarm.
- E708 and AT708, E728, EW717, E729, E753 all had four firefighters which assisted in making an aggressive attack on the fire. Hose lines were in place and officers could be officers without getting involved in pulling a hose line.

- Command only used two of the six Truck Companies on the scene. Command should have been demobilized the remaining trucks sooner.
- Command Post 727 was not needed on the incident. The fire was out quickly and there was no need for it.

Units on Incident

A708	AR733	AT708	AT723	E723	BC703B
BC705	C703D	C708	C708B	C717E	CP727
CT740	DC700	E703	E708	E725	E728
E740	E753	EMS703	EW717	FM19	FM24
AT723	AT708	AT723	BC703	BC703B	BC705
BC703	C708	C708B	C717H	CP727	CT733
DC700B	E703	E708	E723	E729	E740
E753	EMS703	EW717	FM55	FM4	FM23
FM59	FM51	RS717	FM67	K717	A708B
T703	M708B	RS729	RS717	SA700	T731
T731					