



MAY

Report Number: 06-218

Report Date: 04/03/2006 1344

Demographics

Department type: Combination, Mostly paid

Job or rank: Captain

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 34 - 42

Years of fire service experience: 14 - 16

Region: FEMA Region III

Event Information

Event type: Fire emergency event: structure fire, vehicle fire, wildland fire, etc.

Event date and time: 03/03/2004 1245

Hours into the shift: 5 - 8

Event participation: Involved in the event

Do you think this will happen again?

What do you believe caused the event?

- Communication
- Situational Awareness
- Accountability
- Staffing
- Decision Making

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Minor injury
- Lost time injury
- Life threatening injury

Event Description

I was a Lieutenant riding fourth on the Heavy Rescue and a Master Firefighter was riding the OIC position due to the fact I had just returned to the station from a promotional exam. We were dispatched for a house fire in our company's second due area. We arrived on the scene and found a working fire in the basement area that had been started by a plumber replacing the hot water heater. The first look at the home had nothing showing from Side A. On the circle check, I was met by the plumber in the front yard who stated that he was bumping the system and started the fire. He did shut off the gas at the propane cylinder and thought his partner went back into the home. I proceeded around to the rear and double checked the cylinder valve to make sure it was in the off position. At this point I had a moderate amount of smoke coming from the basement door and began to prepare for entry along with my Firefighter. We both made entry to start the search and found moderate heat. We searched the C&D quadrant at which point the hoseline was attacking the fire. We thought we had completed the search of the basement so we re-directed to start the search of the upper floor. We came out of the basement and met up with the MFF/OIC and the driver of the Rescue on the front side of the house. We split into two groups, one to search the first floor and the other the second. My team went upstairs and began a left handed search. Halfway through the first room the evacuation signal was given and I led us toward what I thought was the steps. It was into the hall closet. We backed out and headed for the steps. We found the steps fully involved in fire so the FF, aided by the thermal imaging unit, found another bedroom and began to break out the windows for self-evacuation. He and I had separated, but the sound of breaking glass led me to his location. We both exited the home onto a porch roof and sat on the roof while we waited for a ladder. At this point no ladders had been put up to the building. After we had cleared the building, in less than a minute, the rooms/windows that we vented and exited from were fully involved with fire. In less than ten minutes the home collapsed. After the fire was out we found out that the fire had been burning for some time due to the delay of 911 call and distance the FD had to travel to the scene. During this incident we had several injuries. All were minor but we very easily could have lost at least two personnel.

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned were the Truck did not prepare the building for attack by placing ladders and ventilating. Crews did not understand the amount of fire they had from the beginning.