

**LINE OF DUTY
DEATH REPORT
REPORT SLIDES**



F2023-09

Career Acting Fire Officer Dies
from Floor Collapse during
Interior Fire Attack – Maryland



Summary

- On June 27, 2023, a 25-year-old career navy civilian firefighter died after falling into a basement at a residential structure fire.
- The firefighter, who was the acting officer of Engine 132, was operating an attack line when he fell into the basement inside the front door.
- Engine 132 responded with automatic mutual aid to Box 119 from the local naval base fire department.
- At approximately 0400 hours three occupants were awakened to noise and smoke conditions inside the home and self-evacuated to a neighbor's house across the street.



Aerial view of structure
(Courtesy of Google Earth)



Summary

- During self-evacuation, the monitored fire alarm in the home activated and notified the local public safety answering point (PSAP) at 0404 hours.
- The fire alarm notification was followed by a 9-1-1 call at 0405 hours from the neighbors across the street reporting the house was on fire.
- The PSAP was in the process of initiating the fire alarm response when the incident was upgraded to a structure fire.
- Box 119 was dispatched for a residential structure fire at 0406 hours.
- Engine 1 (PAR 5), Truck 1 (PAR 5), and automatic-aid departments including Tanker 6 (PAR 4), Tanker 3 (PAR 2), Squad 3 (PAR 5), Engine 132 (PAR 4), Truck 13 (PAR 4), Engine 9 (PAR 4), Engine 6 (PAR 3), Engine 7 (PAR 4), Tanker 7 (PAR 6), and Water Supply 5 (PAR 4) were dispatched to Box 119.



Summary

- As responding apparatus were enroute the county fire dispatcher notified Chief 1 (C1), who was enroute to the scene, that several calls had been received indicating a working fire.
- C1 identified the primary hydrant to be used as a water source due to the home being located in a non hydrant area.
- At 0415 hours, C1 arrived on scene and provided a building description to indicate a two-story single family, Type V structure, assumed Incident Command (IC) on side Alpha, and began a scene size-up.
- IC reported a working fire on floors one and two and that a 360-degree walkaround report would follow.



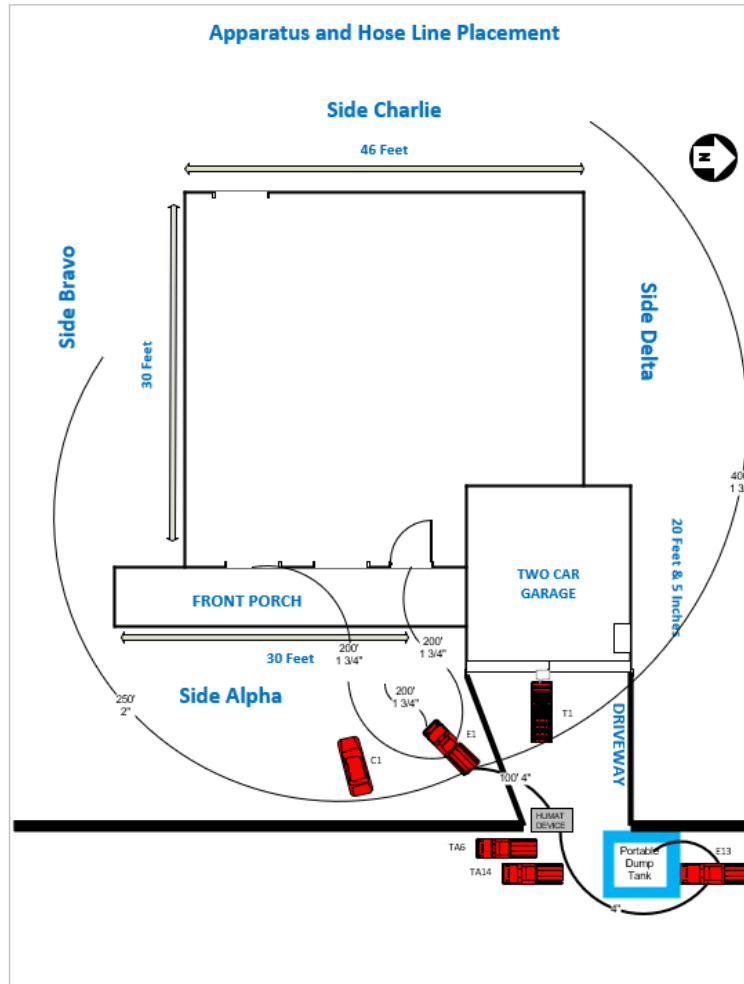
Conditions upon arrival of E1
(Courtesy of Southern Maryland News Network)



Summary

- At 0416 hours, IC advised the county fire dispatcher and incoming fire apparatus the size-up was complete.
- The size-up revealed three stories on side Charlie with a walk out basement.
- IC ordered Engine 1 to forward lay a supply line from the end of the driveway at the street and position on side Alpha out of the way of the responding truck company.
- At approximately 0418 hours, Engine 1 arrived and laid a dry four-inch supply line down the driveway and positioned on side Alpha.
- The crew of Engine 1 deployed a 200' 1³/₄-inch attack line to the front porch.
- Upon arrival, Engine 132 positioned on the street and deployed a portable dump tank for drafting operations.

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Scene Diagram (Courtesy of: NIOSH)



Summary

- The acting officer (deceased firefighter) of Engine 132 reported to the command post in the yard on side Alpha.
- Engine 132 was assigned to Chief 3B, the Division 1 supervisor.
- Engine 132 was assigned to stretch a second 200' 1³/₄-inch attack line to the front porch.
- Both 1³/₄-inch attack lines were operated in a transitional mode from the front porch prior to making an offensive interior attack.
- At approximately 0425 hours, two firefighters from Engine 132 advanced their 1³/₄-inch attack line through a first-floor window to the left of the front door.



Summary

- At 0426 hours, emergency traffic was transmitted from the safety officer Chief 9B on the tactical channel that the second floor collapsed on side Charlie.
- IC requested the county fire dispatcher to transmit the evacuation tone.
- A Mayday was declared at 0427 hours by Chief 7A reporting a missing firefighter on the first floor who had possibly fallen into the basement.
- The IC moved the fireground operations communications to ALPHA 4 and assigned Chief 6 to oversee the fireground operations while the IC maintained the Mayday on ALPHA 3.

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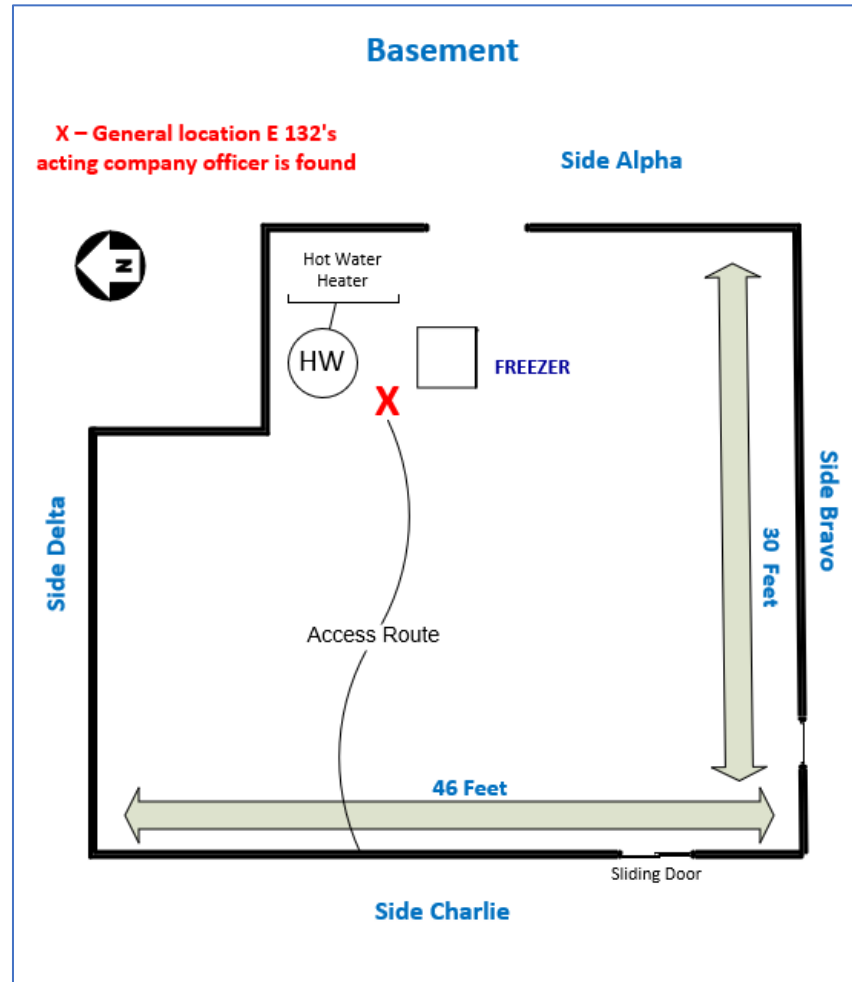
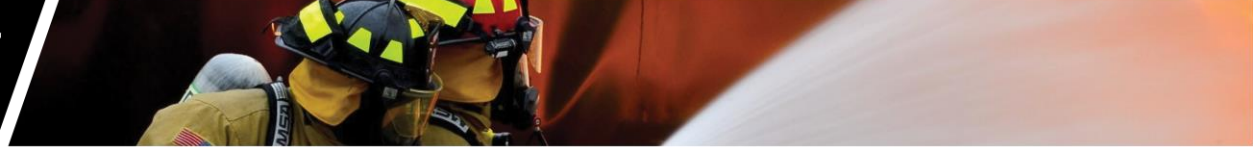


Diagram of the Basement
(Courtesy of: NIOSH)



Summary

- The Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) from Engine 6 was deployed to the front porch while IC announced a defensive strategy on ALPHA 3.
- C7A confirmed that the missing firefighter was Engine 132's company officer at 0428 hours.
- After several attempts to rescue the Engine 132 company officer, the strategy was changed from a rescue operation to recovery.
- Engine 132's company officer was removed from the structure at approximately 0616 hours and transported by an advanced life support (ALS) ambulance to a local hospital where he was pronounced deceased.



A view of the structure from side Alpha after the fire was knocked down.
(Photo courtesy of Fire Marshals Office)



Contributing Factors

- Compromised situational awareness
- Ineffective risk/benefit analysis and scene size-up
- Ineffective use of appropriate strategy and tactics
- Ineffective professional development
- Lack of ongoing crew integrity
- Lack of information shared from 9-1-1 caller to responding units



Recommendations

- Support the development and maintenance of effective situational awareness during emergency incidents.
- Incident commanders should define their fireground strategy, tactics, and goals based upon a risk/benefit analysis and a detailed scene size-up to include known risk, building type and era, smoke conditions, hazardous energy, and capabilities of on-scene resources.
- Fire departments can develop policies to aid in the selection of the appropriate strategy and tactics for offensive, defensive, and transitional fire attacks.



Recommendations

- Fire Departments should develop and implement a professional development plan to ensure all personnel receive technical and academic competencies relative to the roles personnel are expected to perform on emergency scenes.
- Incident commanders and company officers should ensure that crew integrity is properly maintained by visual, direct, or verbal (voice or radio) contact when operating in an immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH) atmosphere.
- PSAP's should ensure that all information received from 9-1-1 callers is clearly understood and relayed to responding emergency personnel in as close to real time as possible.

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