

**SERIOUS
INJURY REPORT**
REPORT SLIDES

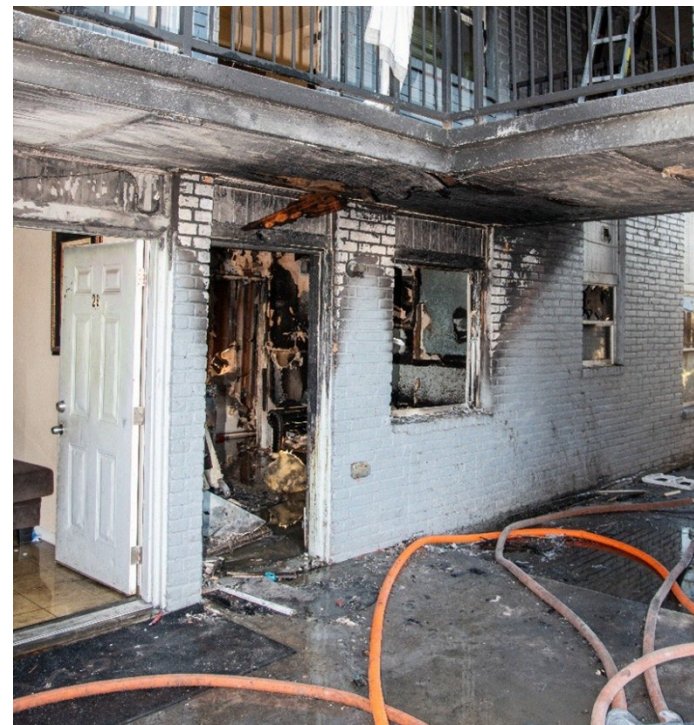


F2025-01

Senior Captain and Two
Firefighters of Ladder Company
Burned During Primary Search in
Garden Apartment Fire – Texas

Summary

- On January 7, 2025, a senior captain and two firefighters were injured while performing a primary search in a garden apartment building.
- At 05:28 hours, the office of emergency communications (OEC) received the first call reporting an apartment fire and subsequently dispatched the first alarm assignment.



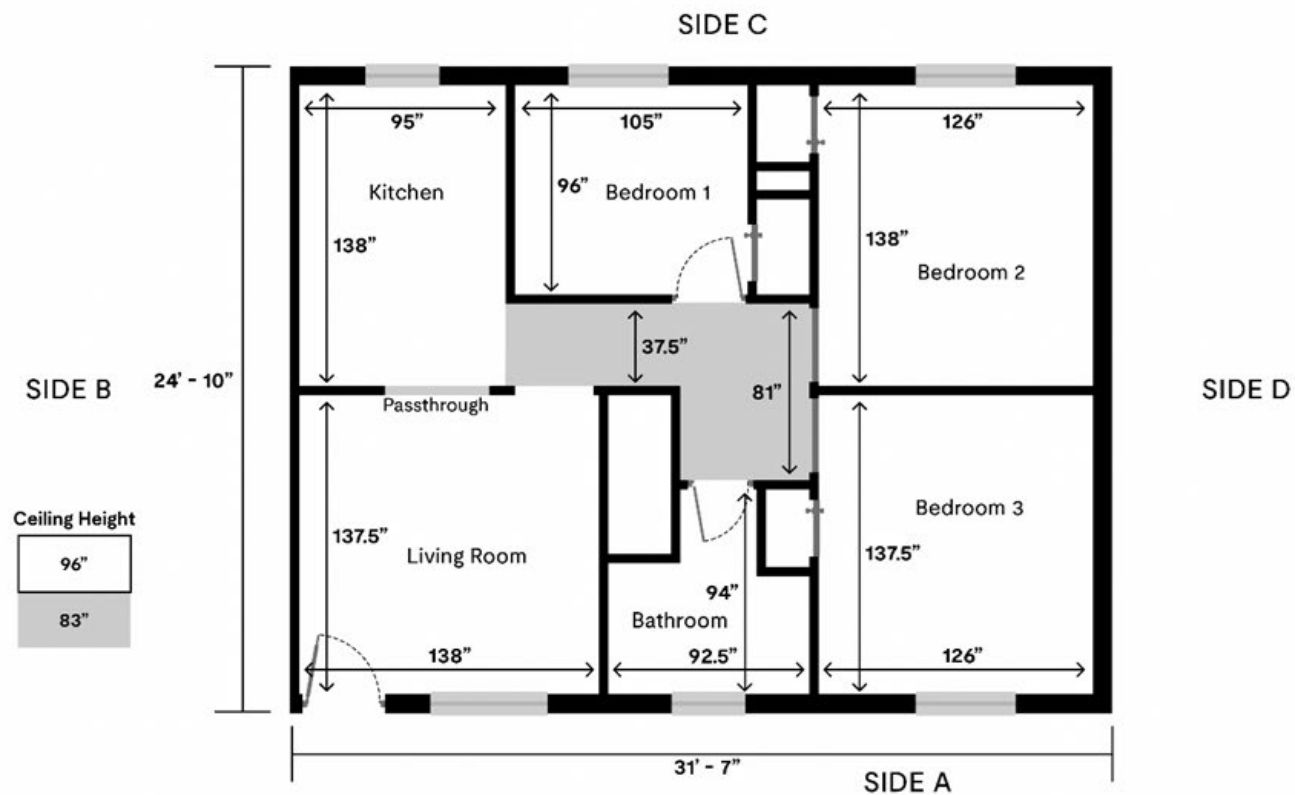
View from the courtyard into the fire apartment, Side Alpha.
(Courtesy of the fire department)



Summary

- District Chief 46 (DC46) arrived on scene with smoke showing in the courtyard.
- DC46 pulled past Side Alpha to view Side Charlie where fire had self-ventilated through a window.
- DC46 positioned across the street from the apartment complex facing the courtyard of the building and provided a size up of “District 46 on scene, fire showing on a two-story apartment, establishing command.”
- DC46 updated Engine 35 (E35) that the fire appeared to be on the first floor past the courtyard.

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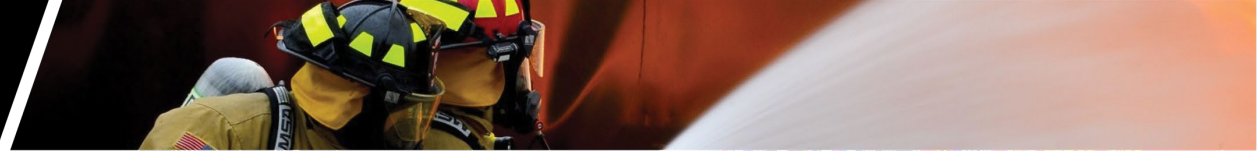


Dimensioned floor plan of the fire apartment. Note that the ceiling height of the hallway is 13 inches shorter than the ceiling height of the rooms. The lowered ceiling height in the hallway provided space for the HVAC duct work. (Courtesy UL FSRI)



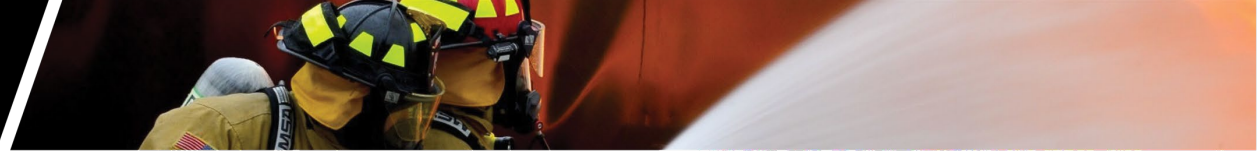
Summary

- E35 stretched a crosslay and an apartment lay preconnect from the rear of the engine.
- With the hoseline stretched to the front door of the apartment, E35A called E35D to charge the line repeatedly.
- Getting no response, E35A headed toward the engine and became involved in a physical altercation with a civilian.
- This prevented E35A from following Ladder 46's (L46) crew with a hoseline as they made entry into the apartment to conduct a primary search.



Summary

- The altercation between the civilian and E35 continued and subsequently distracted many of the personnel on scene.
- The door and living room window to the apartment were open with fire venting out when L46 made entry.
- Fire conditions progressed rapidly while L46's crew was inside conducting the primary search.
- During the civilian altercation with E35, flames filled the doorway and the door closed to the unit.



Summary

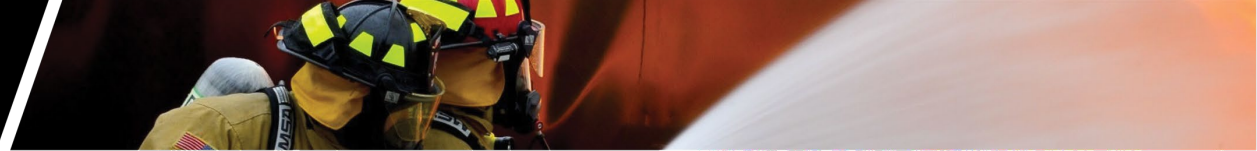
- DC46 requested a status update from E35 asking if there was water on the fire at 05:37 hours.
- E35A said they had water on the fire and were making entry.
- Less than a minute later E35A requested a medic unit to the front door.
- Immediately following that request was a Mayday call from L46B using the emergency activation button on the remote speaker mic.



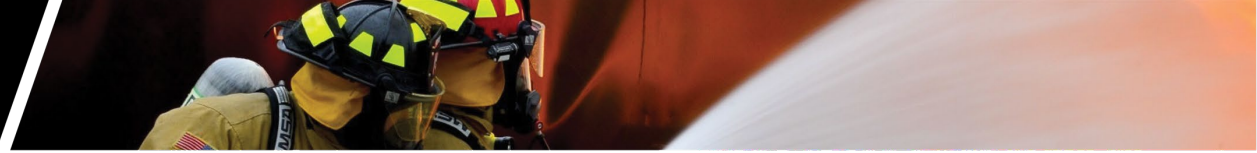
Summary

- At the same time, firefighters from E35 attempted to force the door open and remove the L46 crew.
- L46A and L46C were removed rapidly once the door was broken down and removed.
- L46B self-extricated through the Side Alpha door about one minute after the other members of L46.
- At 05:41 hours, DC46 began conducting personnel accountability reports (PARs) for operating crews to account for all firefighters and requested a second alarm.
- Roughly a minute later, the L46 crew showed all in alert on the electronic accountability system.

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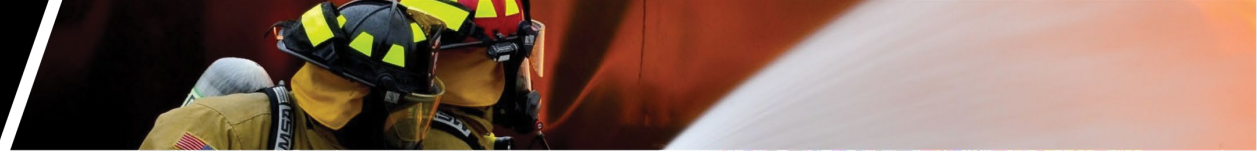


Vantage points of the living room. Top left - Side Alpha, top right - Side Bravo, bottom left - Side Charlie, bottom right - Side Delta. (Courtesy of the fire department)



Summary

- DC46 requested confirmation that all personnel were out of the structure.
- DC26 arrived on scene at 05:43 hours and assigned Side Alpha as their area of responsibility.
- Crews began re-entering the structure and extinguished the fire.
- At 05:44 hours, OEC updated command that 10 minutes had passed.
- At 05:55 hours, DC46 declared the incident under control.
- At 06:02 hours, DC46 updated OEC that three injured firefighters were transported from the scene.



Contributing Factors

- Fire behavior, dynamics, and tactics
- Department culture and risk management
- Impact of the personal protective equipment (PPE) on perception and recognition of environmental changes
- Delayed water application and responder scene safety
- Communication of conditions
- Delayed fire department notification



Recommendations

- Fire departments should ensure firefighters employ tactics aligned with fire conditions when making entry to reduce thermal exposure to PPE.
- Fire departments should ensure personnel identify isolation opportunities from changing fire conditions.
- Fire departments should ensure all personnel are trained on the “GRAB LIVES” fireground survival techniques.
- Fire departments should develop a department culture that balances the life safety mission with proactive risk management.



Recommendations

- Fire departments should ensure that firefighters understand the capabilities and limitations of selected PPE for the applicable hazards and tactical operations.
- Fire departments should coordinate response procedures with local law enforcement to protect firefighters and prevent interference when working at emergency scenes.
- Fire departments should ensure incident commanders (ICs) immediately establish divisions/groups with a supervisor to communicate conditions, actions, or needs.
- Fire departments should ensure firefighters protect radios and cables by wearing radio straps under their turnout coat.
- Fire departments should educate the community to enhance individual knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors to help reduce risks, injuries, and fires within the community.

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Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program
Surveillance and Field Investigations Branch
Division of Safety Research

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