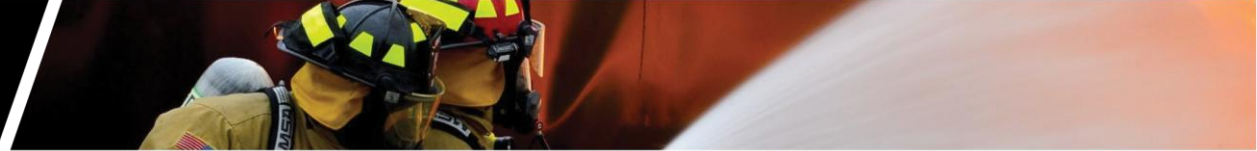


**SERIOUS  
INJURY REPORT**  
REPORT SLIDES



## **F2026-02**

Career Firefighter Injured after  
Falling from Ladder while Self-  
Extricating from Boarding House  
Fire – Pennsylvania



# Summary

- On February 20, 2026, one career firefighter was seriously injured after falling from a ladder while self-extricating from a boarding house fire.
- At approximately 10:45 hours, the public safety answering point (PSAP) received a 911 call reporting an electrical fire in the basement of a boarding house.
- At 10:46 hours, a box alarm assignment was dispatched for a high occupancy, electrical fire in the basement.



View of structure, Side Bravo.  
(Courtesy of the fire department)

# Summary

- At 10:48 hours, Engine 20-1 arrived on scene, and Lieutenant 20 reported smoke in the rear of the building.
- Utility 20 arrived on scene, and Captain 20 established command.
- Firefighters stretched a hoseline to the basement and extinguished the fire.
- Lieutenant 20 reported that the fire was knocked down and requested ventilation.



Firefighters preparing to enter the basement, Side Bravo.  
(Courtesy of the fire department)



# Summary

- Turbulent, heavy brown smoke came from the boarded-up windows on the first division near the basement door.
- At 10:53 hours, Captain 20 requested the second alarm.
- Ladder 24 arrived on scene and staged on Side Alpha. Ladder 24 firefighter (seriously injured) had a face-to-face with Captain 20, who assigned his crew to conduct a primary search.
- Ladder 24 firefighter entered the building as Ladder 24 driver/operator put on the rest of his personal protective equipment (PPE).



Post-ventilation conditions, Side Bravo.  
(Courtesy of the fire department)

# Summary

- At 10:55 hours, the PSAP dispatched the second alarm assignment.
- Captain 20 walked down the alley on Side Bravo and reported active fire from windows on the first division.
- Ladder 24 firefighter and driver/operator completed searches on the second division as the hallway started filling with heavy white smoke.



Fire conditions, Side Bravo.  
(Courtesy of the fire department)



# Summary

- Ladder 24 firefighter and driver/operator split up, and each found multiple victims, who were directed to the stairs to self-extricate.
- At 10:59 hours, Chief 20 assumed command and designated Chief 20-1 as operations.
- Between 11:00 and 11:05 hours, there were multiple reports of entrapments with requests for ladders on Sides Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie.
- Ladder 24 firefighter and Ladder 24 driver/operator went to the third division to continue searches.



Apparatus placement, Side Alpha.  
*(Courtesy of the fire department)*

# Summary

- Ladder 24 firefighter instructed Ladder 24 driver/operator to continue the search on the third division while he (i.e., Ladder 24 firefighter) went to the fourth division to search for a reported victim.
- As smoke conditions worsened, Ladder 24 driver/operator exited the building to get a thermal imaging camera (TIC) from his apparatus.
- At 11:06 hours, Captain 20 reported active fire on the second division.
- Multiple firefighters rescued victims from windows on all sides.



Lieutenants 20 and 24 climbing ladder, Side Bravo.  
*(Courtesy of the fire department)*



# Summary

- At 11:10 hours, Ladder 24 firefighter started to find his way out and his end-of-service-time indicator (EOSTI) later sounded.
- Conditions were zero visibility, and Ladder 24 firefighter tried to find his way by feel.
- He realized that he did not have enough air to exit the building.
- He found a room that he previously searched that had a window.
- As he broke and cleared the window, his facepiece sealed tightly to his face.
- His self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) also indicated he was out of air.



# Summary

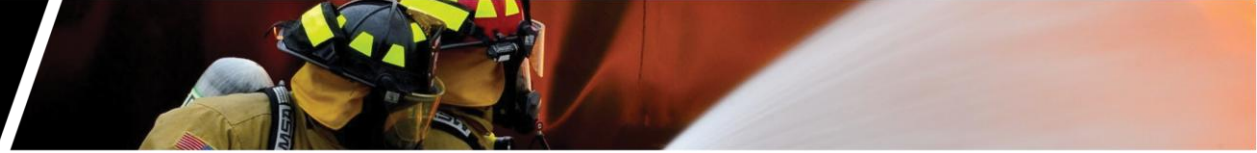
- He removed his regulator, placed his hood over the facepiece connection to filter breathe, and hung his head out of the window.
- Multiple reports of entrapments continued with requests for ladders.
- Between 11:11 and 11:14 hours, Ladder 24 firefighter made multiple radio transmissions reporting he was out of air and needed a ladder to the window.
- At 11:15 hours, Ladder 24 firefighter called a Mayday and activated his personal alert safety system (PASS).
- Chief 20 requested the PSAP to clear the radio channel for the Mayday and move all other on-scene communications to the next available channel.
- Firefighters on scene looked at the building's windows, trying to locate Ladder 24 firefighter.

# Summary

- Due to the amount of smoke exiting the windows, Ladder 24 firefighter was not visible.
- At 11:19 hours, Chief 20 requested the PSAP announce to all units to evacuate the structure.
- Not being able to hear the radio and transmit clearly, Ladder 24 firefighter deactivated his PASS.
- As the wind blew the smoke periodically from the windows, firefighters on the ground momentarily saw Ladder 24 firefighter.



Ladder 24 firefighter in window, Side Bravo.  
(Courtesy of the fire department)



# Summary

- Ladder 24 firefighter again reported he could not exit or breathe.
- He stated the need for a ladder and could see one below him.
- Firefighters raised a 35 ft ladder to his location after initially raising it to an adjacent window in another room.
- Lieutenant 24 and Engine 20-1 firefighter placed the ladder against the building by putting it under cable lines that were running to the building from a telephone pole.
- The ladder was close to live power lines coming from the same telephone pole.

# Summary

- At 11:21 hours, Ladder 24 firefighter stepped out and onto the ladder after it was raised to the correct window.
- As Ladder 24 firefighter descended and reached the top of the second division windows, he stepped off the ladder after losing consciousness and fell more than 20 ft to the ground.
- At 11:30 hours, an EMS unit reported that Ladder 24 firefighter was loaded and transported to a local hospital.

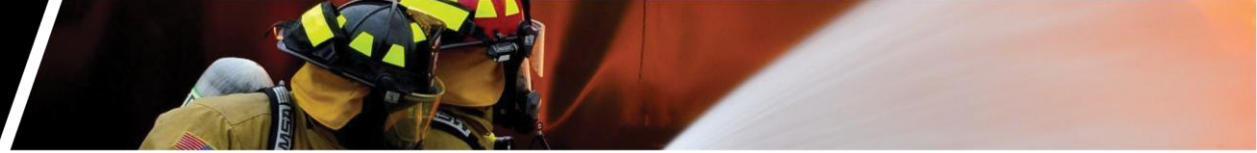


Ladder 24 firefighter descending ladder, Side Bravo.  
(Courtesy of the fire department)



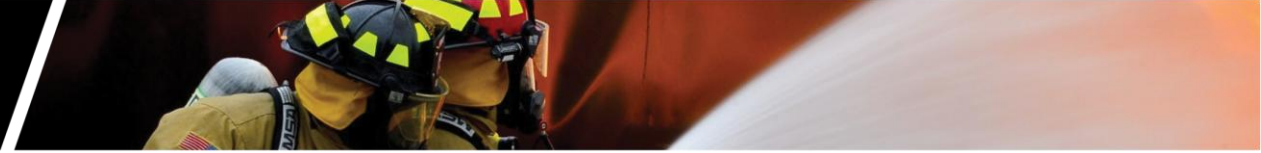
# Contributing Factors

- Fall from ladder during self-extrication
- Strategy and tactics
- Air management and firefighter survival
- Crew integrity
- Available personnel/adequate staffing
- Pre-incident planning
- Fire inspection and identification of hazards
- Structured communications protocols
- Termination of utilities



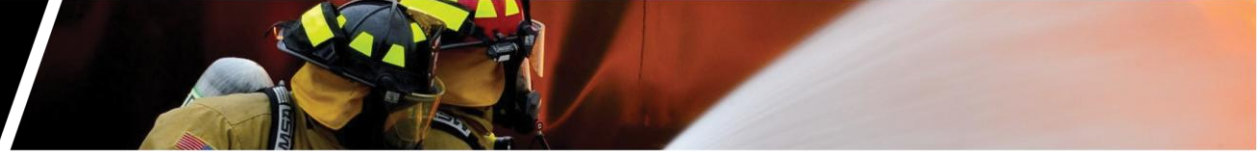
# Recommendations

- Fire departments should assist Mayday firefighters down ground ladders during self-extrication when their medical status is unknown.
- Fire departments should ensure the first arriving firefighters choose initial and ongoing operational strategies based on the tactical considerations for buildings converted to residential or multiple dwellings.
- Fire departments should ensure firefighters and fire officers are properly trained in and use principles of air management and survival procedures for out-of-air emergencies.



# Recommendations

- Fire departments should train firefighters and fire officers to maintain crew integrity when operating in the hazard zone.
- Fire departments should ensure that adequate staffing is available to respond to emergency incidents.
- Fire departments should develop a pre-incident plan for high-risk occupancies, such as boarding houses.



# Recommendations

- Governing municipalities (federal, state, regional/county, and local) should partner with fire departments to enforce the applicable fire and life safety codes at high-risk occupancies, such as boarding houses.
- Public Safety Answering Points (federal, state, regional/county, and local) should have adequate staffing that allows dispatchers to be dedicated to an incident to support fireground operations, the incident commander, and Mayday management.
- Electric utility companies should ensure utilities are disconnected when requested by fire departments to support fireground operations and firefighter safety.

# Contact Us

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

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