LINE OF DUTY DEATH REPORT

REPORT SLIDES



F2026-04

Truck Company Firefighter Dies after Floor Collapse at Basement Fire in a Multi-Family Residential Structure – Illinois

Summary

- On March 16, 2026, a firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) was injured after falling through the floor while performing a primary search in a multi-family residential structure.
- The firefighter died the next day.
- At approximately 11:25 hours, the Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) received a 911 call reporting smoke and an alarm activation on the third floor of a three-story building.



Aerial view of the structure, Side Alpha and Bravo, mid-fire.
(Courtesy of the fire department)



Summary

- OEMC dispatched a Still alarm for the location of the incident.
- At approximately 11:29 hours, the Still alarm companies arrived with Engine 102 (E102) providing an initial size-up of smoke showing from a four-story ordinary, occupied residential building.
- OEMC upgraded the incident to a Working Fire.
- At approximately 11:32 hours, E102 Officer provided an updated size-up of two floors on fire and requested an incident upgrade to a Still and Box.
- E102 deployed a handline through the Side Alpha entrance.
- Engine 70 (E70) deployed a handline through the Side Bravo entrance.
- Truck 47 (T47) joined E70 and entered the building through Side Bravo.



Summary

- At approximately 11:37 hours, E70 and T47 began searching for fire in the basement and garden apartment units.
- They initially found no fire—only light smoke—and proceeded to the first floor after a radio transmission of fire there.
- T47 Officer and Roof (deceased firefighter) began primary searches in all Side Charlie units.
- T47 Officer and Roof made entry from the Side Bravo stairwell into the first floor, Side Charlie apartment unit, and began a split search.

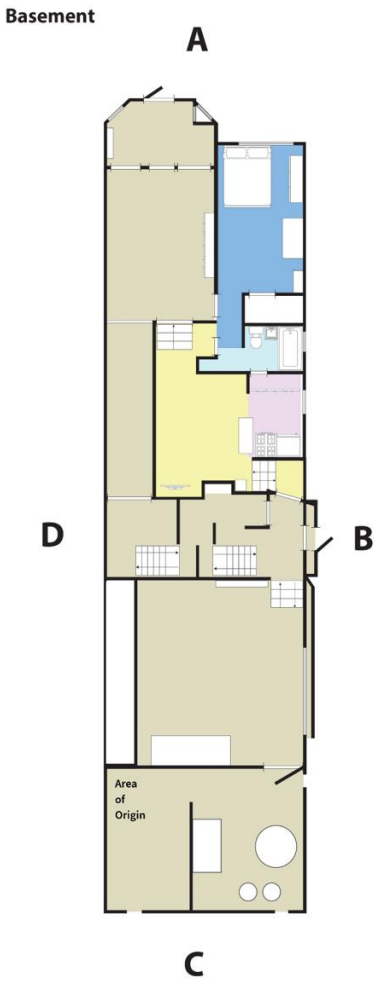


Summary

- T47 Officer began a right-hand wall search, while T47 Roof began a left-hand wall search.
- Smoke conditions in the Side Charlie apartment worsened and visibility decreased as they crawled into the unit to search.
- T47 Officer began searching and was slowed down at the closed end of the kitchen as T47 Roof moved into the next room.
- T47 Officer told T47 Roof that they needed to take the windows on Side Bravo of the unit.

Summary

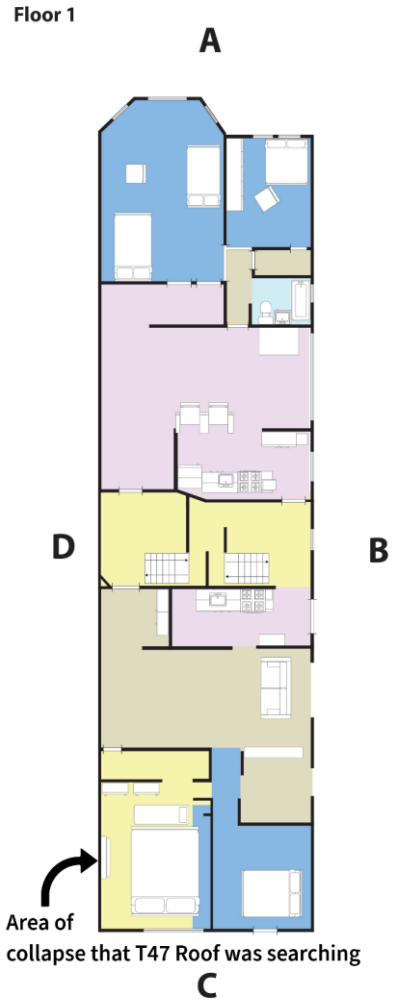
- At approximately 11:43 hours, 222 arrived, positioned behind the incident building, and walked from Side Charlie to Side Alpha through the gangway along Side Bravo.
- He looked into a window on Side Bravo to the rearmost section of the basement and told E70 Officer that the fire was there.
- At approximately 11:44 hours, E70 joined with two personnel from Squad 2 (SQD2), made access into the rearmost section of the basement, and began attacking the fire.



Sketch of basement floor plan, not to scale or exact dimensions.
(Courtesy of fire department)

Summary

- At approximately 11:51 hours, T47 Officer, still in the first floor Side Charlie apartment searching, heard someone yell for help near Side Delta.
- He continued that way on his right-hand search while T47 Roof continued his left-hand search.
- He encountered E102, who said they were all good.
- They continued into the unit for fire attack and to complete the search.
- SQD2 Officer and E70 were operating in the basement when the first floor collapsed in front of them into the basement storage room.



Sketch of upper floor plan, not to scale or exact dimensions. (*Courtesy of fire department*)

Summary

- SQD2 Officer heard screaming from the pile of debris and furniture and immediately transmitted a Mayday.
- SQD2 personnel operating in the basement quickly went to work to search the pile of debris and found T47 Roof among the pile of burning debris and furniture.
- At approximately 11:54 hours, 272 transmitted a Mayday to OEMC for a firefighter through the floor.





(Left): Front of turnout coat.
(Right): Back and arm detail of turnout coat.
(Photos courtesy of NIOSH)



Summary

- 222 promptly deployed the staged RIT company to the Mayday down the Side Bravo gangway to the basement entrance.
- At approximately 11:55 hours, SQD2 personnel updated that they had T47 Roof out of the pile and were moving to the Side Bravo basement window to remove him.
- SQD2 personnel assigned to Side Charlie with E70 Officer met the interior crew at the Side Bravo basement window and facilitated the removal of T47 Roof.
- Crews moved him to Side Alpha and transferred him to Ambulance 46 (A46).
- T47 Roof was transferred to the hospital for care but succumbed to his injuries from this incident the following morning, March 17, 2026.



Contributing Factors

- Uncoordinated ventilation and fire control
- Basement/below grade fire
- Thermal imager use and firefighter survival
- Personnel accountability system
- Structured communications protocols
- Arson and delayed activation of fire department response
- Building and property inspections



Recommendations

- Fire departments should provide firefighters with training and operational support to coordinate ventilation and fire control tactics in light of how ventilation affects fire behavior.
- Fire departments should support first arriving firefighters in selecting initial and ongoing operational strategies based on the tactical considerations for basement and below grade fires.
- Fire departments should provide all firefighters and officers with training in the use of, and access to, thermal imagers for interior operations and firefighter survival procedures.
- Fire departments should use a personnel accountability system to identify the location and function of all operating personnel.



Recommendations

- Public Safety Answering Points (federal, state, regional/county, and local) should have adequate staffing and capability that allows dispatchers to be dedicated to an incident to support fireground operations, the incident command, and Mayday management.
- Governing municipalities (federal, state, regional/county, and local) should consider requiring property owners to use and maintain monitored detection systems in all multi-family residential occupancies, regardless of when they were constructed.
- Governing municipalities (federal, state, regional/county, and local) should provide appropriate staffing to support thorough and timely building and property inspections.



Contact Us

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

FFFIPP Reports Webpage

Download the full report