TRAINING NOTES

DIVISION OF TRAINING

3rd Alarm 1604 McAllister

When/Where:

August 23, 2022
1604 McAllister
San Francisco

Responding Units:

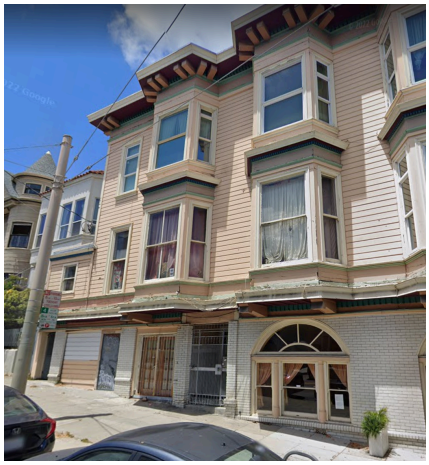
1st: E21, E10, E06, T05, T10, B05, B02, D2, RS1, RC2, M95, TCA 15, E05
2nd: E36, E38, E03, E16, T06, B04, AM102, AR1, BE1, MA1, M85
3rd: E12, E24, E01, E31, T16, T12, B07, RS2, KM110, RC1, M52, T03, M77

1604 McAllister 3rd Alarm

On August 23, 2022, Box 4151 was struck at 1604 McAllister for a fire in the building. Responding units declared a working fire at the three-story type 5 corner building. On arrival, heavy fire was venting from the second floor alpha/bravo corner window. The building posed many challenges due to its unique layout and unassuming construction.

Abnormal Layout

The layout of the three story building, consisting of two stories of residential apartments over commercial space, posed the first challenge for arriving companies. Arriving units observed fire venting from a second floor window and located the main entrance to 1604 McAllister below the involved window. Companies proceeded up the main stairs to the second floor hallway and turned left to encounter a door that was assumed to be the unit involved only to find that door lead to a back stairwell. Seeing smoke coming from an adjacent door, crews proceeded force that door and ended up in a storage room next to the fire room. The decision was made to breach the wall to attack the fire. Another door on the back stairs was found which led to the fire room but it was blocked by storage.



Old Construction

The second challenge posed by this building is the unique construction. 1604 McAllister was previously a church which was converted to what is now a three story commercial/residential building. Despite its relatively unassuming facade, the bones of this building still exhibit characteristics of traditional church construction. This building is true balloon frame construction with primarily lath and plaster which is not as fire resistive as sheet rock. The absence of adequate fire stops and open channels in the walls contributed to rapid vertical fire spread. Due to excessive fire spread behind the walls, checking for extension was an essential part of extinguishment. In this particular building the ceilings were around 15 feet high which required the use of baby extension ladders and ceiling hooks with extensions.

Immediate Roof Rescue

While performing their 360 survey the truck company assigned to the roof observed a victim trapped on a ledge one story down on the Charlie side of the building. The decision was made to send two firefighters in to third floor via the fire escape to affect the rescue from the interior, while lowering a 22' ladder down to the ledge from the roof.

Fire on the Roof

While in the process fo expanding the size of the existing vent hole, roofing materials ignited causing fire to spread on the surface of the roof towards the Delta side. A 1 ¾" hose line was brought up by rope bag to extinguish the fire.

Takeaways

The Incident Commander (IC), Group/Division supervisors, and single resources are responsible to have a clear understanding of the assigned operational area, the tactics, tasks and companies assigned. Except for a brief face to face meetings for coordination, Supervisors should not be in the same operational area. ICs should pick the most strategic location for a command post and communicate the location of the command post to all responding companies.

Group/Division supervisors are responsible for monitoring the tactical objectives and should not get caught up on Company tasks. For example, Fire Attack should be focusing on the progress of containing

Tactical Considerations:

- **The Incident Commander (IC), Group/Division supervisors, and single resources need to have a clear understanding of the assigned operational area, the tactics, tasks and companies assigned.**
- **ICs should pick most strategic location for command post and communicate it to all responding units.**
- **Group/Division supervisors are responsible for monitoring the tactical objectives, not company tasks.**
- **Companies must continually monitor for extension due to constantly changing conditions.**
- **Ventilation tactics such as the opening/closing of penthouse doors must be communicated to companies on the fire ground.**

and extinguishing the fire and not on a hose lead. Impediments in accomplishing the goal should be communicated to Command over TAC.

Companies must continually monitor and open walls and ceilings with a charged hose lead on the floor above and not solely rely on a TIC. The purpose of Companies above the fire is to locate and immediately contain any vertical extension. Even after initially opening walls and ceilings with no fire discovery.

Supervisors must notify Command over the TAC if they cannot accomplish their task or reach their assigned area. Supervisors must not reassign themselves to different areas or tasks without permission from the IC. Fire ground discipline is paramount.

Coordination between Groups/Divisions is critical, changing ventilation tactics on the roof need to be communicated and coordinated with interior groups. For example, the opening/closing of a penthouse door needs to be communicated so interior companies can give an update on subsequent conditions. Once hose lines are in operation and ventilation is established, penthouse doors cannot be closed without first discussing with interior chiefs. The potential impact on interior crews must be determined by those interior crews.

Once fire is confirmed in the attic a tactical priority is to get a horizontal hose lead in operation to limit fire advancement. Communication of ceiling height over TAC will allow companies to bring the appropriate size interior ladders and ceiling hooks with extensions. Companies at this fire were able to keep the fire in the attic to one corner of the building. The roof group started the process of a trench cut using building features to their advantage, which is a tactic that can be employed to slow horizontal fire spread in the attic space.