



Grayson Ridge Apartments

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Mission

To combine strengths and resources for the purpose of enhancing service delivery to our communities across all jurisdictional boundaries.

Grayson Ridge Apartment Fire Incident Summary

On February 13, 2018 at 18:03 hours, NRHW Alarm dispatched a one alarm structure fire assignment to the Grayson Ridge Apartments located at 6901 NE Loop 820. The complex was built in 1984 and consists of 244 units in two and three story buildings. The fire building was a three story building in the middle with two stories on each end. Brick veneer covered the building and it was constructed using Type 5 Construction. A swimming pool was located on the Bravo-Charlie side of the building and the leasing office/clubhouse was on the Charlie-Delta side. The alarm assignment consisted of E222, E223, E224, T225, Battalion 22, M222 and M223. Engine 222 arrived at 1806 and performed a 360 size-up. Engine 222 reported they found smoke coming from a 3rd floor window sill. A courtyard load was deployed and advanced to the 3rd floor for investigation and possible fire attack. Engine 223 was assigned water supply and to utilize the other half of the courtyard load and go to the 3rd floor. Truck 225 arrived on scene and was assigned to set the ladder and secure utilities. Engine 224 and Medic 222 were assigned together for primary search.

Battalion 22 arrived and assumed "Command". The I.C. requested a 2nd alarm consisting of Q221, E291, M224 and A151. Engine 222 observed smoke in a third floor apartment but believed the source was on the second floor. Engine 222 moved between the third and second floors and attempted a CAN report but did not get through. Engine 224, while performing the primary search requested a hand line to an apartment on the second floor and split off Medic 222 to accomplish this task. Engine 224 then moved to the first floor and attacked the fire in the trusses between the floors. The situation and re-assignments of companies was not communicated to Command and he was still believing that the fire was on the third floor. Approximately 29 minutes into the incident, Command was advised that the fire was between the first and second floors. Companies moved in and out of the structure and changed assignments without going through Command. That lead to a very confusing scene and resulted in task being overlooked. The 2nd alarm companies arrived on scene and were assigned to support operations that were ongoing. Command requested two engine companies and a Battalion Chief from Haltom City.

VISION

To be a reliable and sustainable organization

Strengthen the continuity of operations and partnership

Industry leader in regional partnerships that provide specialty services

Identify and evaluate opportunities for additional collaboration

Promote a culture of safety for our members



Always Consider

Command and Control

Communications

Building Construction

Tactical Priorities

Span-of-Control

Continual Size-Up

As the companies pulled more ceiling, it became evident that the fire was further advanced than originally thought. Crews still on the third floor started experiencing extreme heat, conditions were changing dramatically, and assignments were not being fulfilled. A defensive strategy was called for approximately 45 minutes into the fire and all companies were removed from the building. As companies were leaving the third floor, the area ignited. E471, E475 and Battalion 47 arrived on scene at 18:45 hours. Battalion 47 was assigned to Alpha-Side Supervisor and Chief 290 was assigned as the Charlie Division supervisor and observed fire on all three floors north of the breezeway. Engine 475 was assigned to the Alpha Division and Engine 471 was assigned to the Charlie Division. A second call for additional equipment was initiated and two Truck companies were dispatched. A Command level decision was made to try and cut the fire off utilizing a breezeway from the Charlie Division. When this plan was discussed, neither the Safety Officer nor the Charlie Division Supervisor saw anything that concerned them with the plan. Approximately 20 minutes later, Engine 471 was sent to the second floor breezeway to pull ceiling and check for extension. Engine 290 and Engine 475 were sent to the third floor above Engine 471 to do the same. As Engine 471 pulled the ceiling of the breezeway, they found fire in the void area

between the second and third floor. The radio was extremely busy at the time so Engine 471's officer went to the third floor to tell the Charlie Division Supervisor what they had found. He then returned to the 2nd floor. Upon his return, the conditions had changed to heavy fire between the floors and directly under the crews working on the 3rd floor. He again returned to the 3rd floor to report the conditions. Upon receiving this additional information, the Charlie Division Supervisor began issuing the evacuation order. Engine 471's officer returned to the 2nd floor and began the evacuation of his crew. Within about 60 seconds of returning to the second floor, the 3rd floor breezeway collapsed barely missing E471's entire crew. The members on the third floor scrambled to the stairway, however, one member from Engine 291 fell through the floor onto the second floor. This member was pinned under a section of the third floor breezeway. Charlie Division called a Mayday for a member through the floor. With a little maneuvering, the Engine 291 firefighter was able to free himself and crawl from the Charlie side to the Alpha side of the building and escape. He suffered minor injuries and was transported to the hospital. All offensive operations stopped and a defensive strategy was declared on the entire building for the duration of the incident. During these events, the two additional truck companies had not arrived on scene.

Values

Collaboration
Service Excellence
Accountability
Transparency
Visionary
Community-Focused

Contributing Factors

The following were part of the Contributing Factors:

- Must maintain Overall Situational Awareness
- Continuously calculate an overall Risk vs. Benefit strategy
- Improve communications from task to tactical and tactical to strategic levels
- Early identification of lightweight construction
- Recognize the fire spread and the amount of stress already put on the building due to an extended operational period
- Freelancing



Key Recommendations

COMMAND AND CONTROL

- Continually size up the building
- Remember “Red Flag Warnings” (Use them to develop the Strategy)
- Establish Division/Groups to maintain a manageable Span-of-Control (Five is Optimal)
- Prioritize all Tactical Assignments to effectively accomplish the Overall Strategy
- Maintain 3-Deep Deployment
- Utilize Level 2 Staging and a Staging Manager to help manage radio traffic and resources
- If there is a time gap between the implementation of a tactic, re-evaluate before implementing
- Increase extra alarm assignments to compliment the first alarm assignment
- Establish and maintain RIT
- Have enough companies to effectively cut off the fire spread – two minimum per floor
- Maintain the cut-off positions, if fire on any floor, back everyone up to the next cut-off point
- Changes in assignments must go through Command
- No Freelancing
- Crews must maintain crew integrity
- Provide Command with Incident Technicians and Senior Advisors
- Request resources using “alarms” instead of piece-mealing them

Training... Training... Training...

Never stop training. NEFDA has made a commitment to learning by educating every member of our 14 organizations. All information learned during this incident will be passed on, with the common goal of continued excellence in fire fighting and Fire Fighter Safety.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

- Remember the limitations of Lightweight Construction (time, weight, connectors, etc...)
- Parallel chord trusses allow the fire to move in all directions
- Extended Operations can affect the building. Keep in mind the weight of water, personnel and other forces working against the original design of the building

COMMUNICATIONS

- Communicate the information that impacts strategic decisions.
- Maintain discipline while using the radio.
- Utilize face-to-face communications as much as possible when dealing with tasks.
- Remain calm
- Ensure communications are received and understood. Repeat the message back.
- Relay critical information to the appropriate person
- Institute risk based dispatching

Photo by Ben Saladino 02/13/2018 19:08:45 PM D76_1649

