

# PIRR

## *BERKELEY FIRE DEPARTMENT*

### **Post-Incident Review Report of Serious Injuries, Illness, Accidents and Near-Miss Incidents**



**Near Miss Incident  
3<sup>rd</sup> Alarm Commercial Structure Fire  
2345 Channing St.  
September 30<sup>th</sup> 2016  
BFD Incident # 2016-011118  
PIRR #16-001**

**This review report is intended as a safety and training tool, an aid to preventing future occurrences.  
The information contained herein is subject to revision as further investigation is conducted and  
additional information is developed**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On Friday, September 30, 2016 the Berkeley Fire Department sent a full assignment response to a reported structure fire at 2345 Channing Street in Berkeley. Upon arrival of the first in Berkeley units, the fire quickly escalated to a second alarm and eventually extended to a Mutual Aid Structure response, effectively a third alarm. As the fire conditions grew worse, there was a reported partial roof collapse. At this point, IC elected to “abandon the building”.

At approximately 0:50 minutes into the fire incident, Incident Command issued the “abandon-the-building” broadcast over all three radio channels (B1, CMD 11 & TAC 31) due to rapidly changing fire conditions witnessed on Division 3 from the ICP located on the Alpha side.

During the evacuation of personnel and just prior to conducting a roll call, personnel on the exterior Delta side of the incident reported a firefighter positioned on a 3<sup>rd</sup> floor window sill on the Delta side (2<sup>nd</sup> floor as seen from the Dana St side) ready for rescue as a “mayday” was simultaneously broadcasted from his portable radio. Suppression crews on the exterior Delta side immediately re-positioned the hose streams to provide protection from flames above the firefighter while ground crews positioned an extension ladder to the bottom of the windowsill. The firefighter successfully self-rescued down the ladder and taken immediately to the rehabilitation group already established near the ICP for medical evaluation and treatment by EMS personnel. He was uninjured.

## **WEATHER CONDITIONS**

The temperature at the time of the fire was approximately 67 degrees: Humidity 69%: Winds 10-15 MPH out of the west: good visibility, and dry conditions. Source: Weather Underground.

## **RESOURCE AVAILABILITY**

At the time of the Fire there were the following Berkeley resources available; 6 Engines, 2 Trucks, 4 ambulances, 4 chief officers and 2 staff captains.

For the Mutual Aid response, Albany Fire provided 1 Engine and 1 Ambulance, Alameda County Fire 1 Engine, Oakland Fire 4 Engines, 1 Truck and 1 Battalion Chief, Paramedic Plus with 1 Paramedic Supervisor

## **BUILDING CONSTRUCTION**

Structure is a 3 story masonry-brick church complex with a large subterranean basement. Remodel build in May 2003. The structure was divided into four main sections. The Sanctuary at 24,431 sq feet, The Chapel at 1,912 sq feet, The Plymouth House at 12,904 sq feet and the Pilgrim Hall at 23,973 sq feet for a total interior footprint of 63,220 sq feet. The structure spanned the majority of an entire City block. Hyperlink to building architect schematic attached. [G:\STATIONS\FIRE INVESTIGATIONS\2345 Channing Way First Congregational Church\Floor Plans From Moe Wright\2318FC Drawings \(1\).pdf](G:\STATIONS\FIRE INVESTIGATIONS\2345 Channing Way First Congregational Church\Floor Plans From Moe Wright\2318FC Drawings (1).pdf)

## SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

B2 arrived on scene reported smoke and flames from the roof around the chimney located near the Alpha/Bravo corner of a 3-story brick structure. A working fire was declared and the first arriving Engine Company would have a hydrant located IFO the structure near the Alpha/Delta corner. B2 named the incident Channing IC and moved the incident from Command 11 to TAC 31. E5 was assigned Fire Attack. UCPD reported the building evacuated and assisted with crowd control and traffic control. All suppression units were given specific assignments at this time.

Medic 3 responded as part of the first alarm assignment. After Medic 3 arrived on scene, M3 FF/PM 1 and M3FF/PM 2 made face to face contact with the Incident Commander and were ordered to report to Division 3 with “long tools”. M3 FF/PM 1 and M3 FF/PM 2 entered the building and proceeded to Division 3 and made contact with the E5 Captain and were ordered to begin pulling ceiling. Visibility was described as good with light smoke, Division 3 was requesting additional personnel. At this time a 2 ½ hose line was being deployed into the Division 3 Alpha area. E2 Captain instructed M3 FF/PM 2 to assist with the deployment of the 2 ½ hose line in the Alpha/Delta area of Division 3. M3 FF/PM 1 was being instructed by E2 Captain various locations to pull ceiling. M3 FF/PM 1 was working pulling ceiling with E2 FF and with the Engine 4 crew that had recently arrived to assist Division 3. At some point, M3 FF/PM 1 was separated from the Engine 4 crew and was working with E2 FF in a separate room, during this effort it was noted that a heavy conversion of smoke and steam entered into the room through ceiling that had been pulled. At this time, M3 FF/PM 1 notified E2 FF that he was going to locate and report back to Engine 4 Crew.

M3 FF/PM 2 had remained on the 2 ½ hose line, when his vibra-alert on his SCBA began activating. M3 FF/PM 2 inquired with Engine 2 Captain and Engine 5 Captain as to the location of M3 FF/PM 1, neither Captain knew of the M3 FF/PM 1 location. M3 FF/PM 2 assumed that M3 FF/PM 1 may have exited the building to change out his SCBA bottle.

M3 FF/PM 1 was trying to locate Engine 4 crew and searching toward the Charlie/Delta area of the building. Visibility was described as “still good” in that area. A few minutes later M3 FF/PM 1 found himself in a room with poor visibility, as his SCBA vibra-alert began activating. As fire conditions rapidly changed as viewed from the Command Post, IC ordered an “Abandon the Building” on all channels. At this time, M3 FF/PM 1 noticed an immediate change in smoke conditions described as the “smoke getting warm” and no visibility. Concurrently, M3 FF/PM 1

heard over his portable radio, “Abandon the building, everyone out”. The Division 3 Chief believed all personnel had exited his Division and proceeded to head to the Command Post for new face to face orders. Inside the building, in a room near the Charlie/Delta corner, M3 FF/PM 1 was able to remain upright, located a wall and began a right handed search; a window was located and opened. M3 FF/PM 1 called a “Mayday” over Berkeley Channel 1, identified himself and his location on the Charlie/Delta side of the building, the emergency button on his portable was not activated. BC2 was operating on Tac 31 and IC was operating on Command 11 and unable to hear the “Mayday” on Berkeley Channel 1. BC2 does not specifically recall when he was finally made aware that there was a “Mayday” occurring, but that he does remember hearing some non-radio, verbal traffic at the Command Post that there was a “Mayday” and someone was needing help on the Delta side of the structure. Dispatch repeated the “Mayday” to IC over Command 11, which was acknowledged by IC.

BC2 went on foot to visualize the Delta side of the structure, and that is when he saw M3FF/PM1 positioned in a top story window with one arm and one leg outside the window on the exterior of the building. Safety Officer 1 heard the original “Mayday” broadcast as he was scanning Berkeley Channel 1. Safety Officer 1 and AO 5 grabbed a 28’ ladder off E5 and put it up to the window. M3 FF/PM 1 had his upper body out of the window, and the extension ladder was placed at the window sill, M3 FF/PM1 assisted in locating the ladder to the sill and proceeded to exit the building head first, then once clear of the window he rotated himself to a feet first position and self-extricated to the ground. M3 FF/PM 1 was evaluated by the Medic 1 Crew for 10 minutes with no injuries noted.

## **SAFETY ISSUES FOR REVIEW**

- Berkeley Fire Department MOP
- Volume #3 Emergency Operations
  
- Personal Accountability Procedures
- Rapid Intervention Crews Procedures
- Structure Fire Abandon The Building Procedures
  
- FIRESCOPE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM
- Fire Department Structure Fire Operations ICS-SF 2015
  
- Training Division Review:
- Emergency Bail Out Procedures
- “Mayday” Procedures
- Radio Channels

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Firefighter Safety is maintained throughout the incident.
- Span of control is maintained to properly adhere to Department G.O.'S
- Personnel Accountability is maintained throughout the incident to deter free-lancing and to maintain crew integrity.
- Continual size up of the entire structure is communicated throughout the incident.
- Ensure that RIC companies are established at all working fires and are able to expand with the size of the incident. RIC policy and procedures must be followed.
- All available crews on scene are utilized effectively.
- Abandon the Building procedure must be executed correctly according to the G.O.
- M3 FF/PM 1 executed the "Mayday" radio traffic correctly but over Berkeley Channel 1. All crews need to ensure they are on the correct Tactical or Command channel. Personnel calling for a "Mayday" needed to activate the emergency button on the portable radio.
- The Command Post and RIC Team should always scan Berkeley Emergency Channel (portable #16).
- Division Supervisor and Company officers must be able to manage and account for all crewmembers.
- Ambulance personnel on a working fire need to be assigned to a specific Officer, not just a Division.
- Operations and Incident Command giving tactical orders simultaneously to suppression crews is confusing. Only Operations should be giving tactical orders.
- When Division command is passed from one Officer to another, accurate accountability in that Division preferably face to face is important.

# EXHIBITS















