LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FIREGROUND TRAINING CASE STUDY

285 TURK STREET – 2ND ALARM LIGHTWELL FIRE

A fire originating in a residential building's lightwell spread vertically through concealed spaces behind the flashing and metal siding, ultimately reaching the 6th floor and threatening to involve the attic. Standpipe operations were conducted on multiple floors to support suppression efforts. A charged hoseline on the roof, connected to the standpipe outlet, proved critical to the tactical operation for the incident. The Truck Company operating on the roof exposed the lightwell corners and directed hose streams downward into the shaft, thereby stopping vertical extension and preventing the fire from spreading into the attic.



LESSONS LEARNED:

- Fire spread vertically behind flashing and metal siding.
- The confined dimensions of the lightwell complicated suppression and overhaul operations.
- Extensive time was required to expose the concealed fire spread.
- Drone support was requested but unavailable.
- The Truck Company operating on the roof experienced intermittent radio communication issues.
- The charged hoseline on the roof connected to the standpipe outlet prevented attic extension.
- Standpipe operations supported coordinated fire attack throughout the building.
- Strong coordination between B2 (Fire Attack), B3 (Safety Officer), and B4 (Roof Division).
- Effective supervision and communication between divisions improved accountability and operational effectiveness.
- MGS coordinated a MUNI bus to shelter approximately 30 displaced residents, including 10 children awaiting school the following day.
- During overhaul operations, crews were dismantling a clay-covered sewage pipe system to access concealed fire spread behind metal siding. While being removed, a section of pipe unexpectedly failed and broke free, sending a large piece through an apartment where firefighters were operating nearby. No injuries occurred. The incident highlighted the importance of active Safety Officer oversight, hazard recognition, and debris-control procedures during overhaul.

Roof Operations

- Expose the corners of a lightwell whenever possible.
- Direct hose streams downward into the shaft to interrupt vertical fire travel.
- Evaluate attic involvement early.

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- A charged standpipe-supplied hoseline operated from the roof can be critical in preventing attic extension.

Concealed Space Fires
- Fire spread occurred behind flashing and metal siding.
- Angle grinders and Sawzalls may be the preferred tools for removing flashing wrapped around a lightwell.

Communications
- The Truck Company operating on the roof experienced intermittent radio communication issues.
- If communications are not acknowledged, use a whistle OR send a runner.

Debris Removal Safety
- Shine a flashlight into the lightwell before removing debris.
- Confirm no firefighters are operating below.

Truck Company Operations
- The first-arriving Truck Company should ladder the fire escape closest to the standpipe inlet.

Utilities
- When securing gas and electrical service, include all units adjacent to the lightwell from the lowest floor to the highest

KEY TAKEAWAY

This incident demonstrates the importance of coordinated standpipe operations, aggressive roof-based fire attack, effective division supervision, communication contingencies, and disciplined safety oversight during fires involving concealed vertical extension through lightwells.

Critical Near Miss – Failed Clay Sewer Pipe



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