

Major Fire / Camera Update

12/20/06 78 W, 1 I - + 14 - 17

Pics quickly coming from this afternoon's major working fire on Wesvill Court. Both Lee and Mike were on scene. Regarding Mike's new adventures in DSLR, this incident marks the switch from shooting in RAW to JPEG. The files were just too big. Post-processing, for now, will include auto-leveling, which wasn't done with RAW due to different software. The pics may look a bit different. We'll see what happens.



that picture has a strange deja vu about it.

pal - 12/20/06 - 16:45

yeah that complex is good for about 1 m/w/f a year or so....

CFP 7021 - 12/20/06 - 18:50

I have a question for anyone that was there. It is kind of hard to tell from the pics, but is it me or was what I assume would be Ladder 16 riding the reserve set up in a really bad position to be used to its fullest potential on this apt complex? It looks like if it was at all possible that it should have been up there near eng 14 or eng 8, where the bucket could have been used for ladder pipe operations or used to tote people to the roof instead of them having to throw a ladder that won't or doesn't appear to be able to be raised more than 2 rungs above the roof line. How dangerous is that. On the other hand again it is great to see Raleigh truck companies going to the roofs to cut holes and I commend them for that.

I am only partially armchair quarterbacking this, but for the most part I would like to use this as a learning opportunity.

Mike - 12/20/06 - 22:22

This is an aerial map of the scene: <http://www.google.com/maps?f=q&hl=en..> Ladder 16, using the reserve snorkel, was positioned directly east of the northeast corner of the building.

Legeros - 12/20/06 - 22:38

I thought is was 3 to 5 rungs.

Jason Lane - 12/21/06 - 01:44

That reserve snorkel is about worthless. It has almost no reach and they were directed to position their by a battalion chief. The ground ladders used did not have enough length for that building, I'm sure if they had an adequate ladder it would have been positioned the required

5 rungs above the roof. Also, I heard a few moments of panic instructing Ladder 11's crew to "get off the roof" "leave the ladder and get off the roof". Putting ff's on the roof should be a last resort (as it was here, because the aerial access was blocked by 2 Engines) Get up, do the work as quickly as safely possible, and get off. It comes down to safety for our brothers (and sisters). The roof over a working fire shouldn't be a popular place to occupy.

ncff123 - 12/21/06 - 08:08

Yes, Jason it is supposed to be 3-5, but it was like 2. The firefighter had to get down on his knees to get on the ladder. I would disagree with you ncff123, I don't think the roof should be the last resort. If the situation presents itself, vertical ventilation can be used as a great tool. The fire officer of the truck companies and engine companies will learn that the more it is done around here. I do agree with you that you should get up there, get it done and get off the roof, just not that it is a last resort. The more training that we have on vert vent. and the more building construction training is done the more people will feel comfortable doing it and see the advantages of it.

Why were ladder 11's crew ordered off the roof? Was it simply because there was fire under them or was the roof sagging or were there trusses already burnt away where they were walking? I wasn't there that is why I am asking and trying to make this a chance for learning.

Mike - 12/21/06 - 08:48

I'm not against vertical ventilation. In certain circumstances, there is no substitute. But many times ventilation can be accomplished just as effectively or even more effectively with PPV or other means...but then some aren't comfortable with using PPV during fire attack, it's a training issue, just like vertical venting comfort levels. People always go back to what they're most comfortable with when the proverbial "S*&T" hits the fan.

ncff123 - 12/21/06 - 09:05

Wait a minute. Are roof cuts a first resort, last resort, or somewhere in between? I know I've seen countless examples of, say, LAFD firefighters cutting holes on a roof with flames venting a few feet away. Are they crazy? Sane? Or is this a conditional issue with a bunch of variables too complex to discuss here?

Legeros - 12/21/06 - 10:10

I think that it is a good tool to be used in certain situations. If you have an attic fire it does good to vent it and pull ceilings. It is good for commercial properties where unlike private residences there isn't a bunch of crap stored in the attic and plywood that you would have to try and push down through. If a PPV fan will do the job than that is fine, but too often vertical ventilation should be called for an isn't. If you think it is unsafe to get on the roof, then position your ladder company correctly and close to the building and work off the ladder. It is important for the second and third due engine companies to leave room for the ladder otherwise you are wasting a resource.

I don't think the LAFD guys are crazy or insane. Some of their fires call for more than one vent hole so they cut a second one. If the roof still feels good and looks good then there is no problem cutting another hole with fire under you and already venting. You want fire to come out of your vent hole!

Mike - 12/21/06 - 10:32

A lot of it comes down to preplanning and knowing your district/buildings.

Mike - 12/21/06 - 10:33

Not being terribly active in the fire service anymore, I do know that there are ideal places for positioning apparatus, and then there is what you get. It was always my experience that the two seldom went hand in hand. That is where flexibility and adaptability come in. Fortunately firefighters, paramedics, cops, soldiers, and Marines excel in this quality.

Preplanning is always good. And I always had a plan A and a plan B.

DJ - 12/21/06 - 11:24

More often than not, vertical ventilation SHOULD be performed on structure fires. There should be no distinction between residential or commercial it that regards. Despite popular opinion, aggressive and well thought truck work is essential to the success of putting out the fire. Remember the basic of fire behavior folks: heat and smoke travel UP FIRST, THEN laterally! An all too common mistake made around here is that people consider the ladder truck for master stream use only and feel that they can reposition the apparatus when/if it is needed. The truck SHOULD GET THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING, and if there is a working fire (especially in commercial occupancies) the ladder comes out of the cradle and goes to the roof, along with ground ladders thrown to every floor and on 2 sides. I do see the changes in philosophy that the new chief is bringing, so hopefully the truck (ladder) companies and rescue companies will get to be more proactive on scenes in Raleigh now.

Wayne - 12/21/06 - 11:31

Vertical ventilation definitely needs to be preformed on structure fires, where does heat go? Up. Your cuts needs to be as close as possible to over the main body of fire to get the heat and smoke out of that structure so the interior crews can do their searches and put that fire out. When you vent you release toxic gases and heat the two main things that kill victims in a fire, by venting early but only when the interior crews are ready for it you increase the chance of survival for victims inside the structure. You also greatly improve visibility for the interior crews in the structure. there is no question that correct ladder truck placement is essential on a fire scene and many county and city units need to realize that you only really need one engine and the truck directly in front of the building. The other units need to park out of the way so that the aerial operations can be set up and preformed safely and efficiently.

Vent Enter Search - 12/21/06 - 13:29

Lee's pics have been posted: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/leewilson/a..>

Legeros - 12/21/06 - 17:07

just a thought from an outside opinion, 1st ladders, truck companies have to have access to the bldg, engines companies officers need to try to think ahead when spotting their engines, 2nd ppv ventilation works well as long as the fire attack is coordinated. i was a truckman for the WSFD for 11 yrs and on apt buildings if you don't go up and get a large opening over and or ahead of the fire then it will not be a good day at the office. as one member its all goes back to training. but remember just cause you've done it this way all these years doesn't mean that you can't learn new tricks of the trade.

WSFireBuff ([Email](#)) - 12/21/06 - 23:16

Alright folks,I was there, riding R-14. Is it unfortunate that the front of the building got blocked? Yes. Ok, so adapt and overcome it is. L-11 was on the roof, and I think L-16 was too. Both performed perfect, and got the job done. We had signifigant fire spread horizontally in a common attic, so it was necessary to open it up to cut it off. Don't forget the insulation all over that was smoldering.

Guys, this job is dangerous!! As far as opening the roof being a last resort, hmmm, to put it nicely; train more!! I'm a firm believer in vertical ventilation, especially when there's fire in the attic. GET UP, CUT THE HOLE, AND GET DOWN!! You are bringing the fire to you, so there is no reason to hang out, like some do. That wasn't the case on Wesville. If I remember, the building does have lightweight trusses, that was the reason for the urgency.

An aggressive attack is what saved this complex. Staffing levels hurt a little, with an officer and 1 firefighter to stretch and put a 2" line in operation, while the 2 of us on R-14 assisted with the stretch, forced a few doors and performed a few primaries. Not to mention manning the line after the engine crew went to swap bottles.

If you are going to attempt to put out an attic fire from the inside, you have to get up there, pull ceiling and get in the attic to correctly apply your streams. That's exactly what was done. Everyone hustled, the building is still standing, and the white helmets let there people do their job. I heard directly from Battalion 3's mouth; "that is how you want things to go".

Were there a few lessons learned? Yes, that's every job. But,the RFD did a hell of a job on this one!!

Silver - 12/22/06 - 18:54

I want you all to do a search on google for Houston Fire Station #19. Look at the video clip of L-19 venting the roof, the one set to music. Amazing how well opening the roof works, isn't it??!!

Silver - 12/22/06 - 18:57

Jeff that site is <http://www.thebravestonline.com> and is amazing. As for staffing I'm still left wondering when The City is going to ask for help from staffed county stations? there was one that was closer than the second due with 3 personnel and an engine sitting idle while the crews were waiting for help, what kind of sense does this make. In today's day and age esp during the daytime in this county there is no reason for any department to not call for the help of another.

I know that most of us on here do not make those decisions, but something has to be done, it's just plain crazy.

on another note great job and huge KUDOS to RFD for putting an aggressive stop to it, and for cutting holes on the roof, I hope some of these "bread and butter" tactics spread to other area depts that are afraid to do the job because it's too "unsafe" give me a break. What we do is take calculated risks, and cutting holes in roofs has been done forever and is still the most adequate way to remove heat, prevent fire spread and smoke damage and create a safer environment for both firefighters and possible occupants.

Stay safe out there everybody.

CFP 7021 - 12/22/06 - 19:14

Firehouse has posted a few pics, plus a couple photos from somewhere other than Raleigh. Go figure.

<http://cms.firehouse.com/content/article..>

Legeros - 12/22/06 - 19:44

Yeah, Silver, it is unfortunate that the front of the bldg. got blocked but give [the driver] a break! It was his first fire in Raleigh that he had to pump at and it was a M/W/F at that!

pal - 12/22/06 - 19:45

Jeff, you all did a great job! I have been with the city for 11 years and have rode on every thing from E7,17, 15, 6, 27, R-7, T15, T22 and E7 again. I have been on B shift and A shift. We (those from work) know what the history was with the truck companies and who use to be officers on them. But anyway my point is that today we are making those steps forward in Truck company skills and training. Yes not everyone is on the same page but we are working on it. What it comes down to is training. The fire we had on Hartford L1 told one of the Engines to get out of their way. So many people forget about that ladder! So I'll get to the point 5 engines, 2 ladders and 1 rescue and 2 shifts in 11 years I have seen more aggressive truck company work in 2006 than any other time. I am proud of the growing pains we are going through. You boys keep up the good work remember Green Rd. so many ground ladders on the ground even the 2nd alarm ran out of ladders and L1 trench cutting the roof! Rose Ln. L1 venting of the stick with 2 ground ladders to the bedroom windows. Poole rd. flower shop ladder company venting off the stick. Keep it up and stay safe. Merry Christmas!!!!

Jason Lane - 12/22/06 - 23:07

I wasn't blaming anything on the 1st in driver. He did an awesome job... but it would've been awesome for 8 to pull by 14 with their line. That's all I have to say about that...

Silver - 12/23/06 - 06:03

Like I said before, a learning lesson.....

Silver - 12/23/06 - 06:03

Defiantly a good job we all know how hard it is to get a good quick stop on Apartment Fires, remember the one in Wakefield earlier this year, good job to RFD, like CFP7021 said I wish that western wake's staffed engine had been used considering it would have provided additional badly needed manpower (in the beginning) quickly but hopefully that is something the city will start doing.

Vent Enter Search - 12/23/06 - 06:05

Jeff, I wasn't throwing stones at the driver either! I myself as a driver have to remember about the Ladder Company. VES and 7021, I rode on E27 and WNHFD ran calls with us all the time even in the city limits and it was a great working relationship. We trained with them and even broke bread a couple of times.

Jason Lane - 12/23/06 - 06:06

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preferred)

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/ [Textile](#)

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