

Yesterday's Two Alarms / North Hills Drive

05/23/11 211 W, 2 I - + 7 - 9

This is an updated posting from yesterday. Two alarms at [1923 North Hills Drive](#), which is right around the corner from Blog Central. Engine 16 arriving at a three-story, wood-frame apartment building with 17,160 square-feet. Built 1974 and on an incline. Third floor accessed via North Hills Drive. Smoke showing from along the entire roof line. Declared major working fire on arrival. Interior attack, with fire found inside third-floor leasing office. Contained with no extension. Engine 16 hand laid supply line to street, with Engine 9 reverse-laying to hydrant. Ladder 2 on second alarm positioned behind engine, but not deployed.

Staging on North Hills Drive. Command located on opposite side of North Hills Drive from fire building. Medical monitoring and rehab located on sidewalk in front of fire building. One unit parked on Generation Drive, behind structure. North Hills Drive closed by police. Cause determined as accidental. Two units rendered uninhabitable. No injuries. Dispatched 10:59 a.m. Controlled 11:29 p.m. Units included: E16, E9, E6, E17, E18, E4, E_, L3, L2, R3, R2, B3, B1, A1, C10, C20, C4, EMS 35, EMS 3, EMS _, EMS _, D4, M9_, T1. [See preliminary pics](#) from Mike Legeros, shown below. [See photos](#) from Lee Wilson.



Light smoke showing means major worker?

Joe Shmo - 05/22/11 - 15:14

You were there from get-go too, Joe? I would ascribe the adjective significant to the amount of smoke that I saw showing, when I arrived maybe 60 or 90 seconds behind Engine 16. But even my looking was fleeting. Was driving and trying to park. Can't say my pictures match what I recall seeing, either. Angle, light, contrast, etc. But what I saw and what I shot are perceptual and photographic moments in time. It's the company officer whose eyes and inference and experience make the judgment call.

Legeros - 05/22/11 - 15:36

Why not Joe? Large building, unknown exactly what and where its burning. Why not call for an additional alarm until the company officer finds out what is going on? Then if you dont need them then turn them around. And the terminology Major working fire is not what i consider a major fire its just 2 alarms which still only gives you around 30 firefighters not including chiefs. So I guess that means every volunteer working kitchen fire is a Major worker cause you will see about the same amount of people there. By the way, I'm not picking on vollies.

gen3fire - 05/22/11 - 20:17

Almost every book you read talks about calling for alarms in respect to the threat/potential that is presented. In the case of this call, the potential was **absolutely** there for a 2 alarm.

As we all say, if you think you need it, call it. You can always turn units around versus having to back up and punt.

Again, better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it.

Good call.

Jake T. - 05/22/11 - 20:20

I think this is a good point that is often missed, and the result of confusion for those outside of RFD. The term "major working fire" doesn't necessarily mean its a major working fire, but rather the resources and equipment that is being asked from the initial IC which indicates what is needed or may be potentially needed. Either way, the term will soon be replaced by a sequential alarm system.

Jones - 05/22/11 - 21:11

Call for help early on, especially for an apartment complex. Think about it, a working fire at an apartment complex is dedicating every single resource with none for relief. The potential exists for something big, so call it and then cancel it if need be.

As an aside, only a few more weeks of the "major working fire" B.S.!! Can't wait for the progressive alarms to get here and go live!! Good job, good stop....

Silver - 05/22/11 - 23:17

Silver...bring us up to speed on your last comment. Few more weeks of what?

Buckwheat - 05/24/11 - 15:31

question, not super related to post, but why is there a 75ft ladder at L2 and a 105ft ladder down at L8? It seems like they should be reversed. If anyone could provide an answer. Just curious as to rationale for equipment placement.

charlie3 - 05/24/11 - 19:31

Buckwheat, I believe Silver is referring to radio procedure changes that are coming, that will drop the major working fire designation. Companies will instead call for second alarm if they need a second alarm.

Charlie, Ladder 2 is assigned a truck with reduced length, to meet the size requirements of Station 11. Hence the shorter stick.

Legeros - 05/24/11 - 19:41

@buckwheat; what Mikey said was what I was saying.

@Charlie3; unfortunately it's a situation becoming an issue nationwide; older firehouses not big enough to accommodate the big honkin' modern apparatus.

Silver - 05/24/11 - 23:42

Thanks!

charlie3 - 05/25/11 - 11:32

@Charlie, Lee, & Mike: L2 was custom-built to run out of the Brentwood house. Yes, I know all apparatus is "custom-built" but L2 differs because of the design allowing the total height clearance to be the shortest aerial Pierce has ever manufactured. At the time L2 was due for replacement the facility maintenance budget didn't allow for the construction of bay door and ceiling height expansion. However, the added cost of designing a truck to fit was in the budget for aerial replacement.

RescueRanger - 05/26/11 - 10:05

And recall that Station 11 was modified in 1990, to accommodate a new aerial apparatus. Doors raised and I think ceiling raised, or maybe it was a false ceiling removed?

Legeros - 05/26/11 - 18:44

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