

**Supplement Name: Gater, Jeff**

Wed Dec 30 11:43:50 PST 2015, Jeff Gater, Deputy Chief

I took over City battalion coverage and went en route to the fire. I recommended BC-1 request a Working Incident response, which he did. When I arrived at the ICP a medical/public assist came in for a female needing non-emergency transport from the DaVita Dialysis Center, 1043 Marsh (Spillman run # 15-05845) to French ER. All City units were tied up on the fire so I took the call and responded. I also asked Dispatch to respond the code 11 engine to the fire scene and request a replacement engine through the ECC, which they did. After I cleared the call I returned to the fire and was assigned Division D (Walker/Pismo side) and was initially given 3 engine companies to supervise (CMC E-5188, Cal Fire E-3470, and Five Cities E-6692). Our objective was to keep the fire out of the SDRC storage building and the studio apartment addressed as 150 Higuera. Three hose lines were deployed off the Cal Fire Engine on Pismo Street into those locations. E-5188 staffed the line going into the apartment. E-3470 staffed the line going into the left/center area of the warehouse, and E-6682 deployed their line into the center/right portion of the warehouse. All were walked through the area and given direction to hold the fire out of the apartment and warehouse if possible. They were also advised to keep their crews together and maintain accountability. While orienting crews to the space we were assigned, we became acutely aware of the very heavy vertically arranged high piled, rack based combustible storage. It was composed of a very heavy load of cardboard and plastics (cassette tapes, CD's, albums, sheet plastic) and paper items. The rear portion of the warehouse was essentially two levels. The upper level was a mezzanine floor which had a similar level of products and fuel loading to the lower level. Access and stairs/ladders were tight. Smoke conditions initially were light in the rear of our area. The area of the warehouse toward side A had light to moderate smoke conditions. Visibility was initially adequate in the rear area. Power was off to the building so lighting came from box-lights and PPE/helmet headlamps. None of the buildings/areas we were protecting were sprinklered.

Smoke and heat conditions changed dramatically an hour or so after we entered the area. The decision was made at 1230 hours to initiate salvage of the higher value contents of the apartment addressed as 150 Pismo. The tenant was located and his music equipment other valuables were removed to his pick-up across the street. His keys and wallet were also located. An attempt was also made to locate and remove the SDRC computer servers through the rear of the building, but smoke conditions made this difficult. I later learned this was successfully accomplished by E-2 Capt King and his crew from the front of the building.

Fire, heat and smoke conditions continued to deteriorate and the fire had reached and started burning into the apartment. It was also moving into the warehouse area. The fire had apparently found its way through breaches in the firewall or other openings. Several efforts were made by the 3 crews using their hoselines to hold the fire at the firewall. These efforts were unsuccessful and the fire came into the warehouse quickly and with great force. When they would knock down the fire in one area, it would enter the warehouse through another opening. I pulled all crews back to their points of entry and called for a PAR. All crews were able to exit successfully and provide a PAR. E-6692 later reported that the fire had gone over them and behind them, between them and their exit. They also reported almost no visibility even though they were 15-20 feet from an exit. Crews were told to fight the fire from doorways or windows from this point on.

With the increase in fire activity on this side of the fire, I directed E-6692 move their engine and take the hydrant on Walker and Pismo, and then pump the 3-4 2.5" lines that we were going to use on the fire from the Pismo Street side.

Three more units were assigned to my Division- Santa Margarita Volunteer E-7891, ATA T-7545, and Paso Robles E-8191. E-7891 was assigned to a hose line on Pismo Street. Before T-7545 arrived the owners of the building/business addressed as 1335 Walker where Appendage and Bough was located arrived and asked to be able to remove their retail stock. In 15 minutes a large group of volunteers assisted by BC Bisson were able to completely empty the store of its contents. The stock was moved off site or into neighboring businesses. T-7545 was assigned to set up on Walker for aerial master stream ops over the warehouse. They brought their own LDH supply line in from a hydrant on Pacific and Walker. When E-8191 arrived they were directed to provide a second supply line into T-7545. They layed in and relay pumped T-7545's second intake. They were later assigned to staff a 2.5" hoseline on Pismo Street and relieve other crews as needed. Division C and D assigned crews worked together along Pismo Street staffing several lines pumped from at least 3 different units to attack the fire from the exterior.

Quality Fabrics was staffed by a Div B crew (SLOFD E-2) who were doing salvage and water removal from that business.

I continued to monitor the firefight and the crew's assignments/progress. I went up into T-7545's basket at least 3X to check on the fire activity and suppression efforts.

Crews were provided food and water, and were rotated through rehab on a regular interval.

Once the fire was nearing control, I started planning for demob/release of Div D resources. E-7891 was released first, followed by E-5188, E-3470, E-6692, E-8191, and then finally T-7545. At that point Div D had no resources assigned but me.

I met with the IC throughout the afternoon and night on regular intervals providing CAN reports/updates.

In the late afternoon I was informed that a male named Jose Nunez lived in the basement of 303 Higuera and that his sister (Iva Nunez Martinez 760-793-6607) was unable to reach him. He had a pre-paid cell phone that he wasn't answering. His dark green van was parked on Pismo Street. The basement underneath 303 Higuera was full of water from firefighting efforts (from gravity- no hose streams had ever been directed into the basement, which was accessed from the Higuera side). His brother Leonardo (Leo) Nunez was contacted by BC Bisson and arrived from Lompoc to provide a description of his brother to PD. It roughly matched a description of a male who tried to move the van earlier in the afternoon but was unable due to firefighting efforts/apparatus located on Pismo Street. At 0730 hours Sunday am Jose Nunez arrived at the fire scene to retrieve his van. He was advised to make contact with his brother and 2 sisters to let them know he was ok. He said he was going to go to Lompoc and stay with family. I obtained his contact info and gave it to Inspector Beres. He said he had been in the basement when the fire started. He said he heard the alarm system go off. When he exited the building to street level he saw the fire for the first time.

He moved across Higuera Street and watched the fire from the safety of the opposite sidewalk.

At approximately 2230 hours after the fire was controlled I went to Station 1 to check the fire prevention records for 295 and 303 Higuera for building info. At that time the decision was made to have BC Berryman return to Station 1 to provide City Battalion coverage. Chief Olson went home at around 0100 hours to rest in preparation to return to the fire scene the next day. I took over Sub IC for the night. The T-1 crew moved onto T-2 and went back to quarters to provide City coverage. T-1 was moved to Pismo Street and set up to provide for aerial master stream operations/mop-up as needed. It was staffed by MacDonald, Pratt, Flatos and Hoover. Mechanic Helper Pinson and Intern also remained on scene through the night to provide for the fueling/maintenance of apparatus and the 4 lighting units provided by Pacific Petroleum. Several times during the night the aerial was used to mop up smoldering debris.

At 0730 hours Sunday am Chief Olson returned to the fire scene. At 0830 Olson took over as Sub IC. I left the scene around 0900 hours and went home.

I returned the next day (Monday) 2-3 times during the day to provide scene staffing on T-2/S-1 with Engineer Polkow, who was there continuously. The site was being prepped to turn over to the property owners at 1700 hours.

During the firefight, several items had been left in the SDRC storage building by Five Cities Engine-6692 when they had to exit quickly due to deteriorating fire conditions. Still in the warehouse building under tons of debris are: two 100' sections of 1-3/4" hose, one 1-1/2" combination nozzle, and three 30 minute SCBA bottles.

Also consumed during the firefight and mop-up operations were eight 5 gallon containers of class A foam concentrate.

Supplemental completed Thu Dec 31 09:09:43 PST 2015, DC Jeff Gater