

Struck By building collapse—Insp # 1687413 Memphis - Fire Department

A 51 year old male employee was crushed when a garage collapsed on him while fighting a fire.

Numerous engines received a call for a structure fire. After arriving onsite, a fire was observed in a dumpster next to a garage on the back side of a house. The dumpster fire had caught the side of the house on fire. As more equipment arrived on the scene, the decision was made to attack the fire from the inside as they checked to make sure no one was in the house. In making this decision, they looked at and around the house to make sure it wasn't abandoned. The yard was kept up and the windows were not boarded up. The decision was made for one of the engines to enter the house from the front and attack it from the second floor. The Chief walked to the garage area of the house to check on the dumpster and the garage area. The fire in the dumpster was at about 50% and flames were going towards the street and not the house. The Chief then looked into the garage area at the unburnt ceiling rafters and header, which were still intact. He told Lieutenant 1, while standing outside the structure and in between the dumpster and the house, to wait before going in. Lieutenant 2 (the victim) was standing next to Lieutenant 1. The Chief turned and started walking back towards the street when he heard a loud pop sound. He turned back toward the structure. The second floor of the garage had fallen straight down, pancaking the lower garage area. The Chief did not see Lieutenant 1 or Lieutenant 2. The Chief ordered a second alarm to bring in more equipment and personnel and informed them of employees trapped in the collapse. He ordered a nozzle from one of the engines to apply water to the area. He then ordered everyone out of the structure and the engine sounded the air horns on their trucks to ensure everyone knew to exit the house. The other firemen on the scene then began to try and rescue the trapped firemen. Lieutenant 1 was rescued first and then Lieutenant 2. Lieutenant 2 was found pinned under the flooring with the header for the garage next to his head. After Lieutenant 1 and Lieutenant 2 were removed, another fire fighter was located and removed from the area. Lieutenant 2 was the only unresponsive person on the scene. EMS personnel on the scene started CPR on Lieutenant 2 as soon as he was evacuated.

In all, four firemen were taken by ambulance to the hospital. Two were treated and released, one remained in the hospital for a longer period of time, and Lieutenant 2 passed away.

Citation(s) as Originally Issued

A complete inspection was conducted at the accident scene. Some of the items cited may not directly relate to the fatality.

No citations were issued.

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