



## **SURVIVAL FACTORS ATTACHMENT 4**

**Fire and EMS Interviews**

**Chattanooga, Tennessee**

**HWY15MH009**

**(4 pages)**

## **1. Initial IC and TriCommVFD Captain E1244**

Cpt 1, Captain from TriCommVFD unit E1244.

The engine had four people on board, a firefighter/EMT, one recruit, and the Captain. Engine 1244 was dispatched from station number four which is about 1 mile from the accident location at 9515 Lee Highway. When they turned onto the highway he could see the smoke from the vehicle fire and it was a light color. Then at about 1/2 mile away, the smoke turned dark, and when they were arriving it was turning light again. He saw that people used fire extinguishers to start putting out the fire. They were the first fire responders to arrive on scene and he decided that the initial action was to do a quick knockdown of the car fire. As the firefighters were working on the car, he did an initial scene assessment. He saw fatalities in at least three vehicles and saw that another possibly needed extrication, the driver of the F150. He saw a man in fatigues, possibly from the National Guard, who told him there were fatalities in some of the vehicles.

He saw that there were also people self-evacuating from the vehicles. He has assigned the EMT from his fire engine to go assist the driver in the Ford F150 while the others worked on the fire. He was trying to get a headcount of the patients, but it was difficult to differentiate between victims and bystanders. About five minutes after he arrived, Chief 1 arrived and became the incident commander. The Hamilton County EMS supervisor then arrived and began to assist counting the victims. He was asked about triage and management of the scene. He said they did not establish a separate triage area because the people were already in a small area, and they kept them where they were. On his initial scene inspection he did not see the ejected fatality but his EMT did, and covered her. He saw two or three other vehicles and the burning vehicle. They worked on getting the driver out of the Ford 150 and get him packaged. The IC (Chief 1) arrived in a Ford Explorer supervisor vehicle about 5 min later. The dispatch log identifies him as unit 1203.

The Captain was asked about the other units on scene. He said there was Tricomm engine H1240 and a pumper truck H1254, a medical truck H1298, and a heavy rescue truck H1281. He said there was also engine H245. They assisted packaging patients and set up an extra hose line in case another fire erupted in the other vehicles.

He was asked about experience and training. He responded that he has about 10.5 years at the station and they do weekly training. He was asked about volunteer versus professional fire fighters. He responded that the fire departments in Chattanooga, Eastridge and Red Butte are all professional, and all other fire departments are volunteer. He said there are about seven or eight VFD's in the county. The others on his truck were the firefighter EMT who has about 10 years experience, the other firefighter had about three or four years experience, and a recruit with very little experience. He noted that they do a lot of fatal accidents on interstate 75.

He also works as a 911 operator at the 911 Call Center. The call center uses the computer aided dispatch system and the system is updated with software. Some vehicles have GPS like some fire department vehicles but not all. More information can be obtained from xxx are the cat specialist and records at the call center. There was a TN DOT camera in the vicinity of the crash but it was facing the wrong direction.

## **2. CFD Supervisor**

CFD Supervisor battalion chief for Chattanooga fire department Chattanooga fire department had jurisdiction for the event but the tri-community volunteer fire department was closer and he did not take over incident command from the volunteer fire department. Collegedale contracts fire services from the tri-community volunteer fire department. XX from the tri-community volunteer fire department was the IC, and arrived about five minutes after the first on scene. The very first on scene was a captain from the tri-community volunteer fire department. he was Cpt 1 and was the initial IC.

The Chattanooga fire department had three vehicles respond the supervisor vehicle driven by the battalion chief squad seven which is an extrication vehicle and Quint seven which is a multipurpose ladder truck. Squad seven and Quint seven were dispatched out of station number seven and arrived on scene at about the same time.

There were other law-enforcement agencies on scene. The sheriffs office did traffic work the Tennessee Highway Patrol did initial to traffic work and truck inspection work and work with the truck driver. The Chattanooga Police Department at primary jurisdiction in the Collegedale police department did traffic.

## **3. CFD Captain, Squad 7**

Chattanooga fire department captain [REDACTED] from squad seven. Squad seven had three people on board to EMTs in the firefighter Quint seven had four people on board to EMTs and two firefighters. The units arrived about the same time and when they arrived they checked in with chief [REDACTED] who said they should check on extricating the driver in the Ford F1 50. They found that the driver of the Ford F1 50 did not need extrication they went and checked on the other vehicles and saw that there was no one in trapped. They then went to the Prius and checked for booster seats to see if they could determine if there was anyone else in the vehicle. They cut out the B pillar of the Prius to be able to check inside and make sure there were no other passengers in the car. They brought some lights to the scene and later help to remove the argument from the Mazda.

He was asked about communication between the fire departments. Did the communication on scene was mostly verbal but they all go to channel for when there is a cooperative event they operate on different channels but can all hear that channel.

He was asked about the incident commander. The incident commander established himself and he knew who he was after he arrived the incident commander signed the initial incident commander to be the operations coordinator. He said there was some traffic getting to the scene and he said that he did not know how many walking wounded there were he was focused on other things. Chattanooga fire department has 23 Mandy units and other vehicles including USARS. He was asked about training and said that they do regular training drills alternating between tabletop drills and field drills. There was a major field MCI drill at the airport last year

they do use our certification training monthly focusing on hazmat and extrication alternate months.

#### **4. EMS Supervisor**

Lt 1 from the Hamilton County emergency medical services.

Lieutenant 1 was driving a supervisor vehicle and arrived on scene when the car was still on fire. He knew there were two ambulances on the way and another supervisor on the way. Dispatch had noted that a firefighter had requested nine ambulances and he was just a couple of minutes away so decided to do his own assessment. The supervisor acts as a coordinator for the emergency medical services and so he changed the call for three total ambulances. Hamilton county has 14 ambulances all of them are ALS ambulances each has at least one paramedic on board. When he arrived on scene the firefighters were putting out the car fire. He saw the Prius and met a try community firefighter. This firefighter told him how many people were involved and he began a rapid assessment. He saw there was a code 73 fatality at least one in the Prius and also saw a code 73 on the occupant who is ejected. He then went to the Ford F-150. At the pick up truck he considered the driver to be critical because of the head laceration and because he was flailing around in the truck. There was a bystander there in at fatigues who looked like he would help. He asked the bystander to stay with the man in the truck and try to calm him down. At this point he did not know how many people were in the fire car due to the fire someone reported six or seven fatalities he reported six fatalities. His captain was on scene and was helping to package patients from the uplander. He saw the driver of the Cadillac walking around and he refused care at that time. After his initial assessment he left the ambulances at three.

The first ambulance, Medic 3, transported the driver of the Ford F1 50 and he was taken to Erlanger Hospital on third Street. A try community responder road with them to help restrain the driver. The second ambulance medic 11 transported the husband and wife from the Chevrolet uplander. Erlanger requested a different facility because they noted they were too busy. Erlanger is the only level one trauma center in the region they have air medevac support through Medcom. Medical 11 transported the two people to memorial Glenwood hospital and he cleared it through Medcom. The third ambulance medic 14 transported the Cadillac driver who had initially refused treatment. He had the third ambulance medic 14 standing by in case someone change their mind. The Cadillac driver was resting in a patrol car in about 30 minutes later the police officer looked at him and said that they should check him out. He appeared to have signs of a head injury so they transported him to the hospital he does not know which hospital. He brought in to other ambulances to transport bodies from the scene. medic number nine transported the driver of the Mazda, and a reserve ambulance transported five bodies to the medical examiners office.

#### **5. Erlanger Hospital Charge Nurse**

The hospital has a dispatch service called med central the hospital has Medevac capabilities with five helicopters and excepts other helicopters The Medcom dispatch center coordinates with other hospitals and informs the charge nurse of the status The hospital has a divert status but very rarely goes on this driver status hospital did not go on to her status during this incident