



# TRAINING NOTES

## DIVISION OF TRAINING

### Louis Mambretti Fire | Garage Door Operations

#### When/Where:

March 9, 1995  
75 Everson Street, San Francisco

#### What:

One firefighter killed and eleven others injured, one critically, fighting a residential fire in the Diamond Heights neighborhood. Three firefighters were trapped when an overhead garage door closed behind them without warning

#### Resources:

United States Fire  
Administration:  
LODD Report



SCAN ME

Youtube:  
Mambretti Fire  
Video



SCAN ME

SFFD Manual:  
Buildings on Slopes

Training Bulletin 95-7 Garage  
Door Precautions and  
Forcible Entry



## Mambretti Fire

On the evening of March 9, 1995, Lt. Louis Mambretti was killed and eleven others critically injured at a wind driven fire in Diamond Heights. The fire occurred in a 3 story below grade single-family home; grade level included the garage and common areas, sub one included three bedrooms and the lowest level sub three was storage space only accessible from the back yard. The fire broke out at approximately 12:45 am. The two adults and four children were woken up by the functioning smoke detectors and the whole family safely exited the home.

Engine 26 arrived on scene at 12:59 am and reported a working fire with moderate smoke coming from the garage. The decision was made to lead an 1- 3/4" ready line into the already open garage door having been told by the residents the fire was in the down stairs bedroom and accessible from the garage.

Shortly after, Battalion 6 arrived on scene and reported fairly heavy black smoke coming from the garage and directed his operator to walk the perimeter of the building for exposure risks. Battalion 6 operator reported that two of the floors of the fire building were fully involved however his traffic went unacknowledged.

## Tactical Considerations:

- It is the first in companies job to secure the garage door. This can be done by using vise grips, propping door open with ceiling hooks or ladders, disabling the electric motor, securing the drive chain, disabling the door track, etc.
- Companies entering a building should always seek secondary egress. Secondary exits within a garage may be obstructed by cars, shelving and clutter.
- Secure all hinged doors attached to garage to control environment and protect egress should conditions change.
- Refrain from advancing down interior stairs when it puts you in a one directional flow path based on fire ventilation profile and the building construction of the incident.
- Clear communication with one strategy confirmed by all companies on scene.
- Gain a 360 view of the building if feasible, if not, try to gain as much building and fire information as you can, including a roof report from the truck company 360.
- Extreme weather conditions require re-assessment of routine response tactics.

While in the process of advancing through the garage into the home, Engine 26 encountered heavy smoke and fire conditions while making their way to the stairs and the decision was made to back out of the garage. While attempting to exit the garage, Lt. Mambretti and the two firefighters found the 16' x 7' single panel 3/4" plywood door weighing about 250 pound had closed trapping them inside. Conditions worsened due to the hinged garage door to the home being propped open and the 60 mph winds hitting the Charlie side on the home.

In attempts to open the garage door, one of the firefighters reached up to find the overhead door release but was unable to raise his hand about three feet due to the heat. One of the surviving firefighter reports that the garage door had been closed for 2-3 minutes before rescue efforts had begun. Attempts were made from exterior crews to gain access to the garage door at around 1:05 am using axes, the Chicago Door Opener and gas powered saw. However, the resiliency of the door and inability to use gas powered tools due to the deteriorating conditions choking out the saws, caused a delay in rescue operations.

Around 1:10 am, a large enough hole was produced in the lower corner of the garage and one of the firefighters was pulled out and conscious. One minute later, the garage door was opened completely and Lt. Mambretti and the other firefighter were found unconscious face down with their SCBA mask disconnected from their regulators. Lt. Mambretti and the two firefighters were taken to the hospital. One firefighter sustained burns to his lungs and third degree burns to his hands and body. The other firefighter was placed in a medically induced coma and was permanently blinded. Lt. Mambretti succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced deceased at the hospital.

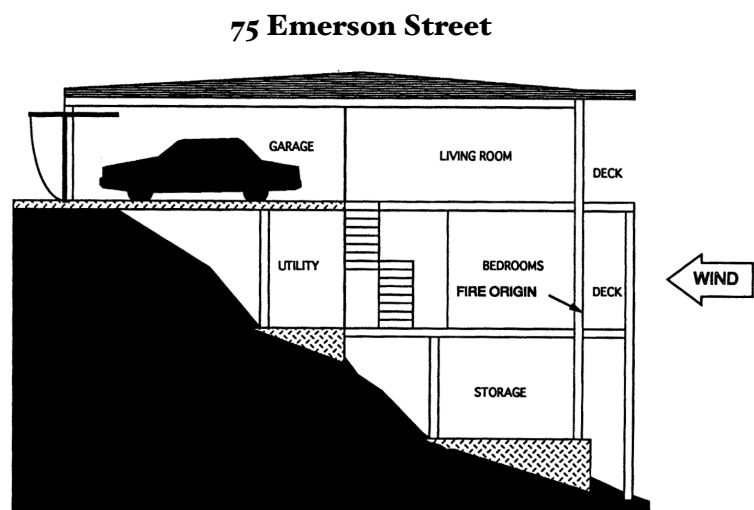


Figure 1a