

Old St. Paul's Church Sanctuary Fire Scenario

Setting: 10 AM Worship Service, 40 minutes into the service, Pastor XXX has completed the sermon. Attendance at service is 120, Team 1 is on duty with 2 members in sanctuary and 2 members outside watching the parking lot and cameras. Weather outside is 40 degrees and sunny.

Event: The boiler tries to fire up to provide for needed heat, but recirculation pump bearings are bad. This causes a motor overload which arcs in the breaker box located in Pastor's changing room. Sparks from the breaker box fall on to the counter top below, which is covered with old bulletins and other miscellaneous flammable items. Paper on counter top starts to smolder and catch fire.

Event Actions:

- An Elder notices the smoke and glowing in the pastor's dressing room and notifies a SST member in choir.
- The SST member goes to investigate with a fire extinguisher in hand. He discovers the cabinet top next to the sink ablaze. He notifies the Pastor and congregation of fire and returns to fire scene. Additional SST members grab fire extinguishers and proceed to the pastor's dressing room. Other SST members in congregation notify the SST office by radio of the situation. A 911 call is placed by the SST Leader.
- The Emergency Alarm is sounded and evacuation called for over sanctuary speakers
- SST Members and Ushers assist the congregation in evacuation of sanctuary thru the Narthex Doors.
- The church has been evacuated and the SST starts doing a family count
- SST Members with fire extinguishers have put out the small blaze and notify the SST Team Leader on duty.
- Newton Fire Dept. arrives on site. Several Church members have opted out of staying on property and are in cars trying to leave. They block Conover-Startown Rd. parking lot exits so the Fire Dept. must park trucks in the main road and block all traffic. Newton police arrive on scene and help with traffic control. EMS arrives on site.
- The SST Team Leader verifies Fire is "Out" and all members are accounted for. He communicates this info to the Fire Chief upon arrival. The Fire Chief sends in a team to investigate and secure scene.
- Several Members of congregation are overcome by the event and must be treated by EMS and Fire Dept.

- The Fire Dept. declares all clear and congregation is dismissed thru back parking lot exit.
- The SST, Council and various church members remain on site to survey damage. Pictures are taken of fire area. Insurance Company “hot line” is notified of the event.

Results of Action:

- Pastors Dressing Room receives minor smoke damage to walls, robes and other items in room. Charring has occurred on cabinet and wall is blackened directly below breaker box. Smoke smell throughout the Sanctuary and fellowship hall.
- Newton Fire Dept. Investigation reveals exploded 20 amp circuit breaker due to extreme overload. The breaker box has no safety door and sparks from exploding breaker started fire. This was the breaker box previously identified on an annual fire inspection as not meeting code.
- 2 fire extinguishers were depleted in fighting fire.

Aftermath:

- Newton Fire Inspector issues citation against Old St Paul’s for non-compliance of fire code resulting in fire. Fined levied is \$25,000.00
- Entire Pastor Dressing room must be repainted and charred cabinets removed. Some minor wall repair required. Worked done in house by volunteers.
- Boiler recirculation pump must be replaced, Cost \$500.00
- Breaker Box and Wiring will have to be replaced, no estimated cost

Facts & Liability:

- Heavy fines will be issued for previously identified fire code violations that results in fire and damage.
- Fire Insurance Co. will send out investigators to review the OSP facility.
- Fire Dept. will re-inspect all previous code items identified on last inspection
- Boiler and Organ will be out of service until new wiring and breaker box can be installed.
- Some members of congregation will be traumatized by this event. EMS will bill church for their services.