

SafetyZONE

NEAR MISS REPORT

FLASHOVER

Recently, on what some might consider a “routine” house fire, a “near miss” occurred in West Kendall. Exterior conditions on arrival were of light wispy smoke. Crews advanced a 1¾” jumpline through the front door of the two story home, trying to locate the fire and found similar smoke conditions in the 1st floor interior with no heat or flame. Proceeding up the stairs they encountered high heat but still no visible flame. A second crew made its way up the stairs to assist with fire attack and search and rescue. A third crew was assigned to raise a ground ladder to the 2nd floor for a secondary means of egress. Reports from the interior were of high heat but no sign of fire upstairs. To this point, there was still only light to moderate wispy white - grey smoke showing from the exterior. Approximately sixteen minutes into the call an upstairs rear window was vented - this is when the conditions visible from outside the structure worsened rapidly. The incident commander immediately ordered for all interior units to evacuate and called for a PAR. As crews were exiting the building, an upstairs window on the “A” side of the structure was vented and a flashover instantly engulfed the floor where crews had been operating 30 seconds earlier. The images below were taken moments after the flashover. After the fire flashed, crews went back inside to extinguish the blaze and finish the job.



The fire originated between the first and second floor and was raging in a large void space and was well hidden from crews both inside and outside the structure. There are many lessons to be learned on this particular fire and a full PIA is forthcoming. Remember, if you find yourself in a position with high heat and no visible flame, look for fire in void spaces above, or in this case, below you. **Flashovers can and will kill firefighters. If you think you have pre-flashover conditions (high heat, turbulent or angry smoke, and or vent point ignition) be prepared to take immediate action to resolve the situation. Cool it, ventilate it, or vacate it and if caught off guard, be prepared to DIVE or DIE! The life you save might be your own.** A special **THANK YOU** goes out to the crews who shared this near miss.

Be careful out there!

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Training and Safety Division