



## Building Collapse

Robinette's Emergency Response Division received a call two days after Christmas following a collapse at a condo-conversion on Chicago's south side. As part of the conversion, a masonry penthouse was being added to the top floor of a 4-story, timber-framed, brick building. During high winds, one of the new masonry walls was blown over. The falling wall collapsed portions of the existing roof, and fell an additional 16', damaging the structural components of the floor below and leaving the building exposed to the harsh winter weather.

Tenants already occupied the bottom two floors of the building, so it was essential that crews complete the work as quickly and safely as possible. Crews needed to stabilize the structure, remove debris, and enclose the building. More importantly, they needed to do this with as little impact as possible to the tenants on the lower floors. Twenty men were mobilized immediately and worked two twelve-hour shifts around the clock for 4 days to accomplish the task.

The location of the collapse in the center of the building prevented the use of cranes or heavy equipment to remove debris. There was no elevator in the building, so crews accomplished all of the work by hand.

Workers immediately installed twenty-five shoring towers to stabilize the building before beginning debris removal. The builder was planning to install a fire escape on one of the affected floors, so Robinette crews cut an opening in the exterior wall in the appropriate area. They used the opening to dispose of debris directly from the affected floors without disturbing the rest of the building. There was no need for the builder to have additional work done for the fire escape opening. Crews built a temporary roof over the collapse areas while debris removal continued. The temporary roof prevented further damage to the building from exposure to snow and freezing temperatures.

Robinette's emergency team accomplished the task late in the evening on New Years Eve.

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