



Saint Paul Fire Department
645 Randolph Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55102
(651) 224-7811

Investigation Report

Case

Case Details

SPFD210209005551	Sampson, Steven	Closed	21-027-572
Case Number	Lead Investigator	Status	Name
Confidential	Accidental	Lightning	
Confidentiality	Disposition	Fire Cause	
02/09/2021	15:17		
Start Date	Start Time	End Date	End Time
Saint Paul Fire Department		Saint Paul Police Department	
Primary Fire Department	Secondary Fire Department	Law Enforcement	

Case Narrative

Saint Paul Police Department were called to investigate a possible break-in at a residence. SPPD officers (SPPD SQ#353) arrived and requested St Paul Fire Department's fire investigation unit with reports of an extinguished fire in the basement. House appears on the vacant / condemned list of addresses per PD. PD also reports that neighbors have made complaints that a couple and their child have been living in the basement of the residence. PD made contact with the owners daughter who reported that her parents who are the owners are out of town; that she stopped there today for the first time in approximately 7 days and discovered that the front window had been broken and that a side door had appeared to be forced. SPPD officers confirmed that the door on side bravo appeared forced and was slightly ajar upon their arrival. Firefighters arrived and began investigations and found evidence of a previous fire in the basement with smoke and soot damage to all three levels of the house and signs of significant heat on the first floor as indicated by melted ceiling fan blades. House and area of origin was monitored for VOCs and no traces were picked up. There was a double Halogen stand work light that was plugged in the immediate area that cannot be ruled out as a possible ignition source. There was a box of wood-stick matches near the area of origin as well. No other competent ignition sources noted throughout the investigation. Further investigation also showed signs of current renovation throughout the house. A pipe had also burst and ice could be seen on both the first floor interior and exterior on side bravo. There was a mattress located in the basement near the area of origin, however, no other indications of current occupancy noted. Firefighters concluded the investigation, contacted Xcel to secure utilities, submitted an Inspection Request form 4 and made contact with the owner's daughter. Command was terminated and the scene was released to SPPD whom provided security until the arrival of the daughter.

Case Background

Case Synopsis

Investigation Comments

Fire

Ignition Sequence

Lightning	Common room, den, family room, living room, lounge		
Fire Cause	Area of Origin	Equipment Power Source	Equipment Portability
Area of Origin Comments			
Radiated or conducted heat from operating equipment		Fabric, fiber, cotton, blends, rayon, wool	
Heat Source		Material Ignited	
Halogen lighting fixture or lamp			
Equipment Involved In Ignition	Equipment Make	Equipment Model	Equipment Serial Number

Fire and Smoke Spread Information

Confined to room of origin	
Fire Spread Material	Fire Spread Avenue
Smoke Spread Material	Smoke Spread Avenue
Fire Comments	

Weather

		14	WSW
Visibility	Relative Humidity (%)	Wind Speed (Mph)	Wind Direction
9.0	0	No	
Temperature (Fahrenheit)	Precipitation	Lightning	Information Obtained From Weather
Sunny			
Weather Comments			

Property Details (1 of 1)

Property

N/A			
Name			
1006 3rd Street East			
Address		Apt/Suite/Room	
Saint Paul	Ramsey County	Minnesota	55106
City	County	State	Postal Code
\$203,000.00	\$1,500.00	\$15,000.00	
Pre Fire Value	Content Loss Value	Structure Loss Value	
Property Description			

Area

Structure	Urban	
Area Type	Area Description	Area Quality

Structure

1 or 2 family dwelling		Vacant	
Property Use		Structure Occupancy	
	Yes	Operating Properly	
Alarm Type	Smoke Detector Present	Smoke Detector Performance	
None			
Sprinkler Standpipes		Sprinkler Standpipes Performance	
30		30	2
Structure Length (Ft)	Structure Height (Ft)	Structure Width (Ft)	Number Of Stories
Wood Frame	Type V		
Construction Type	Structure Type	Structure Material	
Basement	Wood	Pitched	Asphalt
Foundation	Exterior Covering	Roof Type	Roof Material

Examination of the basement found fire heat and smoke damage in a basement room being used as a bedroom. A mattress was on the floor and even though the owner had stated the home was vacant, clothes on the floor and in the room indicated the home had been occupied. The area of greatest fire damage was adjacent a halogen light fixture. Fire and heat patterns indicate heat from the lamp had ignited ordinary combustible material, most likely fabric or paper and extended to an ottoman in close proximity. The light was plugged in and two of the breakers tripped in the electrical panel indicate basement outlets.

Investigation of the main floor found minor smoke that was dissipating with natural ventilation.

Observation of the second floor found water damage from a burst pipe but no sign of fire, heat or smoke damage.

Interior Exam

A 360 of the exterior of the property found a broken window on the main floor and a door partially opened. There was light smoke staining on some main floor windows and soot deposit visible on basement windows. The gas meter had been locked out by Xcel and gas had been shut off to the house prior to the fire.

Exterior Exam

Alarm and Security Services

None	Yes		
Sprinkler Standpipes	Smoke Detectors Present	Smoke Detector Locations	Fire Suppression
Unknown	Unknown		
Doors	Windows	Other Entrances	
Alarm Protection/Security Comments			

Witness Statement (1 of 1)

Witness Statement

Quevada	Erica	
Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
Owner		
Type	Employer	
Interviewed Date	Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other
1006 3rd st E		
Street 1	Street 2	
Saint Paul	Minnesota	55106
City	State	PostalCode
Hispanic or Latino		
Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense Number
- Saw broken window and door cracked open this AM. - House is vacant, my parents own it. -My brother, his partner and their child have been staying at the house. -I don't know when they were their last. -I saw the damage and called 9-1-1.		

Witness Statement Comments

Conclusion

Case Conclusion

After examination of the fire scene, observation of fire patterns of both movement and intensity, as well as statements made by the owner's daughter to SPPD it is my opinion the area of origin was in the basement. The first fuel/material ignited was most likely ordinary combustibile materials on the top of an ottoman-style piece of furniture. The ignition source was radiant heat from a halogen light. The oxidant was normal atmospheric air. The action that brought these items together was a halogen light being placed to close to ordinary combustibile material. The classification of fire cause is accidental. This concludes my investigation and report.

Signature

Sampson, Steven		
Lead Investigator	Signature	Date Submitted

Document Attachment List

Photo Log