



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

Investigation Report

Case

Case Details

SPFD221122053835	Blank, Joseph	Closed	N/A
Case Number	Lead Investigator	Status	Name
Confidential	Accidental	Accidental (Unintentional)	
Confidentiality	Disposition	Fire Cause	
11/22/2022	18:57		
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

The fire department was called to the report of a fire on the exterior of a house. Firefighters arrived and found an exterior fire burning a chicken coop with extension onto the north elevation of the house. The homeowner's father arrived on scene and said his son was out of state. Investigation revealed a clamp on style light was found in the area of fire origin in the straw. Further investigation revealed the light was plugged into an extension cord that was routed through a rear doorframe into the interior of the house and plugged into an electrical receptacle. A study of the electrical distribution panel revealed an unidentified electrical branch circuit breaker found in the "tripped" position.

Case Background

Case Synopsis

This report is based on presently known and available facts, data, and information.

Investigation Comments

Fire

Ignition Sequence

Accidental (Unintentional)	Exterior, exposed surface		
Fire Cause	Area of Origin	Equipment Power Source	Equipment Portability
Area of Origin Comments			
Radiated or conducted heat from operating equipment		Hay, straw	
Heat Source		Material Ignited	
Equipment Involved In Ignition	Equipment Make	Equipment Model	Equipment Serial Number

Fire and Smoke Spread Information

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

Weather

		0	Calm
Visibility	Relative Humidity (%)	Wind Speed (Mph)	Wind Direction
33.0	0	No	
Temperature (Fahrenheit)	Precipitation	Lightning	Information Obtained From Weather
Fair			
Weather Comments			

Property Details (1 of 1)

Property

N/A			
Name			
1219 5th Street East			
Address		Apt/Suite/Room	
Saint Paul	Ramsey County	Minnesota	55106
City	County	State	Postal Code
\$72,700.00	\$3,000.00	\$5,000.00	
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		Unoccupied		
Property Use		Structure Occupancy		
	No			
Alarm Type	Smoke Detector Present	Smoke Detector Performance		
Sprinkler Standpipes		Sprinkler Standpipes Performance		
35		25	2	
Structure Length (Ft)	Structure Height (Ft)	Structure Width (Ft)	Number Of Stories	Number Of Units
Wood Frame	Type V	StructureMaterial_Wood		
Construction Type	Structure Type	Structure Material		
Basement	Other	Pitched	Asphalt	
Foundation	Exterior Covering	Roof Type	Roof Material	

The interior examination began on the south elevation and continued in a systematic clockwise pattern noting areas of fire related damage. The south (back) door of the house reveals that it was forced open. Firefighters state they forced this door open during initial firefighting operations. An orange electrical extension cord is routed from the chicken coop through the south door to an electrical receptacle near the south door. A study of the electrical cord, the receptacle it is plugged into and the plug do not reveal signs of fire damage and appear in good condition. The kitchen reveals a hole in the kitchen ceiling made by firefighters while checking for fire extension and no fire damage is noted. The basement exhibits no fire damage and the electric service meter reveals one "tripped" electric branch circuit breaker. The "tripped" breaker is not labeled to identify which area of the house it is connected to. The second floor exhibits no fire damage. Several holes are made in the knee wall spaces by firefighters checking for fire extension.

Interior Exam

The exterior examination started on the north (front) elevation and continued in a systematic clockwise pattern noting areas of fire related damage.

The south elevation reveals a wood framed chicken coop adjacent to the structure with major fire damage to the entire chicken coop that is partially collapsed. An orange extension cord is routed from the interior of the house to the east elevation of the chicken coop. The lowest level of fire damage is present at the base of the chicken coop and extends upwards to the south elevation siding and eaves. A hole is burned through the west wall of the chicken coop, closest to the north. The floor of the chicken coop reveals several presumed to be dead chickens, straw bedding, and electrical wiring with the insulation burned away. Also, in the fire debris is a clamp on lamp which is a common heating technique for exterior chicken coops. An electrical wire routed from the clamp on lamp is routed out of the chicken coop to a south (back) door to the house.

The north elevation reveals a "V" shaped pattern of fire damage with the apex of the pattern starting at the base of the chicken coop and spreading upward and outward toward the north elevation of the house and the wooden fence behind the chicken coop. The "V" shaped pattern also spreads upward and outward to soffit and electric service meter on the north elevation. The electric service meter, meter box and raceway reveal signs of major fire damage, but no exterior arc sites or "blowouts" are noted. The gas meter on the north elevation reveals no signs of fire damage.

The base of the chicken coop on the south elevation, next to the west elevation is the area of fire origin. The only identified ignition source in the area of fire origin is a clamp on lamp that is energized by an electrical extension cord that is plugged into an electrical receptacle in the south entry of the house. The fuels in the area of origin include straw, chickens and wood. The oxidant is atmospheric air. The cause of the fire is probably the clamp-on lamp bulb coming into contact with straw in the chick coop, raising the straw to its ignition temperature, resulting in a fire. The fire then spread upward and outward to involve the remaining parts of the chicken coop, the fence to the west and the house to the northwest.

Exterior Exam

Alarm and Security Services

	No		
Sprinkler Standpipes	Smoke Detectors Present	Smoke Detector Locations	Fire Suppression
Closed And Locked	Closed And Locked		
Doors	Windows	Other Entrances	
Alarm Protection/Security Comments			

Utilities

Electrical Status	Electrical Entrance	
	Natural	Xcel Energy
Fuel Status	Fuel Type	Fuel Company
		City of Saint Paul Municipal Water
Water Status	Water Company	
Telephone Status		
Utility Comments		

Witness Statement (1 of 3)

Witness Statement

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Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
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911 Caller	
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Type	Employer
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Interviewed Date	Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other
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Street 1	Street 2
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Saint Paul	Minnesota	55106
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City	State	PostalCode
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Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense Number
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Witness Statement Comments

Witness Statement (2 of 3)

Witness Statement

McDowell	Kevin	S
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Last NameFirst NameMiddle Name

Other	
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TypeEmployer

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Interviewed DateInterviewed ByInterviewed By Other

1346 Winchell St	
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Street 1Street 2

Saint Paul	Minnesota	55106
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CityStatePostalCode

White	07/01/1957	
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RaceDate of BirthDriver's Liscense Number

Owner's father
Q: How did you first find out about the fire this evening?
A: My son called me and asked me to come over here.

Witness Statement Comments

Witness Statement (3 of 3)

Witness Statement

McDowell	Lorn	Ross
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Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
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Owner/Occupant	
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Type	Employer
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Interviewed Date	Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other
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1219 5th St E	
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Street 1	Street 2
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Saint Paul	Minnesota	55106
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City	State	PostalCode
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	02/02/1986	
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Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense Number
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Witness Statement Comments

Conclusion

Case Conclusion

After examination of the fire scene, observation of fire patterns of both movement and intensity revealed the fire area of origin is on the north elevation of the house in a chicken coop. The ignition source is a hot lightbulb. The first fuel ignited is straw. The oxidant is atmospheric air. The action that brought these items together is due to improper storage of combustible items in close proximity to a heat source. The classification of fire cause is accidental. This concludes my investigation and report.

Technical Review on 11/27/2022 by Interim Investigator Matthew Brown

Signature

Blank, Joseph

Lead Investigator

Signature

Date Submitted

Document Attachment List

Photo Log