



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

Investigation Report

Case

Case Details

SPFD220803034348	Blank, Joseph	Closed	22-141-477
Case Number	Lead Investigator	Status	Name
Confidential	Incendiary	Intentionally Started	
Confidentiality	Disposition	Fire Cause	
08/03/2022	20:28		
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 smoke in a dwelling. Enroute the assignment was upgraded to a dwelling fire. Police were already on scene and dealing with a person in crisis. Numerous items had been thrown from the second floor unit and a child was removed from the residence for her safety. Police witnessed the suspect lighting stuffed animals on fire, visible through a second floor window. Police noticed increasing smoke and then forced open the entry door and found the suspect naked with a sheet over her and the bed items next to the bed on fire. Police said they restrained the suspect and dragged her out of the house due to increasing smoke conditions and the suspect along with one police officer were transported to Regions Hospital [REDACTED]. Firefighters arrived and found fire venting from two bedroom windows on the southeast corner of the second floor that was auto extending to the eaves and into the attic space.

Case Background

Case Synopsis

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

Investigation Comments

Fire

Ignition Sequence

Intentionally Started	Bedroom - < 5 persons; included are jail or prison		
Fire Cause	Area of Origin	Equipment Power Source	Equipment Portability
Area of Origin Comments			
Lighter: cigarette, cigar		Fabric, fiber, cotton, blends, rayon, wool	
Heat Source		Material Ignited	
Equipment Involved In Ignition	Equipment Make	Equipment Model	Equipment Serial Number

Fire and Smoke Spread Information

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

Weather

		18	NW
Visibility	Relative Humidity (%)	Wind Speed (Mph)	Wind Direction
76.0	0	No	
Temperature (Fahrenheit)	Precipitation	Lightning	Information Obtained From Weather
Partly cloudy			
Weather Comments			

Property Details (1 of 1)

Property

N/A			
Name			
619 Mendota St		2	
Address		Apt/Suite/Room	
Saint Paul	Ramsey County	Minnesota	55106
City	County	State	Postal Code
\$91,600.00	\$15,000.00	\$80,000.00	
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		Occupied			
Property Use		Structure Occupancy			
	Yes	Operating Properly			
Alarm Type		Smoke Detector Present		Smoke Detector Performance	
None					
Sprinkler Standpipes		Sprinkler Standpipes Performance			
54		24	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	Vinyl	Pitched	Asphalt		
Foundation	Exterior Covering	Roof Type	Roof Material		

The interior exam started on the east elevation at the front door identified as #1. The door to this unit showed signs of forced entry. It was learned that firefighters forced this door open during search and rescue activities.

Inspection of the first floor unit revealed no signs of fire damage. A staircase at the rear of the unit led to the basement. Examination of the basement showed no signs of fire damage. The appliances and electric panels were in good condition and were undamaged by fire.

Investigation of the second floor unit started on the east elevation at the front door. The front door was wedged open with fire hoses and did not show signs of forced entry. The staircase leading to the second floor revealed moderate soot damage and a line of demarcation of major smoke damage from the ceiling level down approximately four feet above the floor.

On the west elevation of the second floor, a staircase led to the attic. Inspection of the attic shows increasing smoke damage from west to east. Along the east elevation there is charring to the interior surface of the exterior wall and the roof decking. Fire damage to the attic extended from the bedroom window below and auto extended on the exterior of the structure into the attic via the soffit.

Inspection of the kitchen, on the west end of the second floor revealed major soot damage. A partially burned photograph is on the kitchen table. There is no flame or thermal damage in the kitchen outside of the piece of a partially burned photograph, which is not the result of the fire near the front of the structure. Numerous content items are on the kitchen floor. There is no fire damage to the kitchen stove or other appliances in the kitchen.

Smoke damage on the second floor increases from moderate to major on the walls and ceiling from west to east. A smoke detector in the living room shows a buildup of acoustical soot agglomeration. In the east end of the living room, there is an increase in smoke damage and heat and fire damage to the upper wall and ceiling surfaces leading to a bedroom door.

A bedroom furthest east on the second floor, next to the living room shows a "V"-shaped pattern of fire damage coming from an open door. Fire damage from this doorway extends from the ceiling level down to approximately the one foot level above the floor. Observation of the north elevation of the bedroom reveals a large archway opening to an attached room with heavy soot damage and some heat damage but no direct flame impingement.

Examination of the southeast bedroom wall shows a "V"-shaped pattern of fire damage to the wall on either side of a bedroom window from the level of the window sill to the ceiling.

Observation of the south elevation of the bedroom shows major fire damage.

Inspection of the west elevation of the bedroom reveals a pattern of clean burn near the head of the bed and clean burn extending from the floor to the ceiling and missing gypsum board in a small alcove next to the bed. The bed, with

the head against the west elevation, shows fatigued springs on the north side of the mattress and mass loss to the mattress and bedding on the north side of the bed. The floor next to the bed, in the area of the small alcove is the area of fire origin.

A search in the area of fire origin does not reveal an ignition source outside that of an open flame device being introduced. Identified fuel packages in the area of origin include cotton and synthetic bedding material, a mattress and box spring, wood base trim, carpeting and clothing on the floor. The oxidant is atmospheric air.

The ignition scenario is a female suspect applied a cigarette lighter to bedding or a stuffed animal until the item reached its ignition temperature. Once this item was on fire, the fire grew in intensity and spread outward and upward, and eventually brought the room to flashover, igniting all exposed items in the northeast corner bedroom to their ignition temperature almost instantaneously.

Interior Exam

Observation of the east elevation reveals the front door identified as #2, in the open position with two hose lines stretched through it. The front door identified as #1 is open. No fire damage is visible on the first floor. The second floor southeast bedroom window shows major fire damage coming from the window and extending upward into the soffit.

Examination of the south elevation shows two gas meters in good condition near the east elevation. The meters are both in the "off" position and turned off by firefighters during fire suppression activities. Interior household contents are laying in the yard near the foundation of the building. A window on the second floor that is a part of a southeast bedroom, has a "V"-shaped pattern from the midpoint of the window extending into the soffit. Drop down fire from the melting vinyl siding and soffit are on the ground and heat damage is on the vinyl siding above a burned area of grass next to the foundation. An electric meter is closest to the west elevation. The meter, meter box and conduit routed to a weather drop head is in good condition and shows no signs of fire damage.

Inspection of the west elevation reveals two electric meters near the south elevation. Both electric meters, meter boxes, and conduit routed to the weather head are all in good condition and reveal no signs of fire damage. This elevation shows no signs of fire damage.

Examination of the north elevation showed no signs of fire damage.

Exterior Exam

Alarm and Security Services

None	Yes		
Sprinkler Standpipes	Smoke Detectors Present	Smoke Detector Locations	Fire Suppression
Closed And Locked	Opened And Unlocked		
Doors	Windows	Other Entrances	

Alarm Protection/Security Comments

Witness Statement (1 of 5)

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 5)

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	
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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 (3 of 5)

Witness Statement

Guinn	Brittany	Roberta
Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
Suspect		
Type	Employer	
Interviewed Date	Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other
619 Mendota St #2		
Street 1	Street 2	
Saint Paul	Minnesota	55106
City	State	PostalCode
White	01/11/1990	
Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense Number

Witness Statement Comments

Witness Statement (4 of 5)

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	
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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

Dubose	Ashley	S
Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
Owner		
Type	Employer	
Interviewed Date	Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other
619 Mendota St		
Street 1	Street 2	
Saint Paul	Minnesota	55106
City	State	PostalCode
Black or African American	08/20/1989	
Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense Number

Q: Do you live at the property?

A: No, I rent it out.

Q: Is it a duplex or triplex?

A: A duplex.

Q: How did you first find out about the fire this evening?

A: Well, I got reports that the tenant was throwing things out the window. She eventually threw something heavy enough to break the window, break the neighbor's window. She was fighting with her daughter, there were screams.

Q: What time was this?

A: I got the phone call at - hold on I'll tell you exactly. The first phone call came through..

Q: Is this a witness call you?

A: Yeah. So Nuell. So Emmanuelle's mother moved out last night thank God. This is one of seven police phone calls before this fire happened, just so you know. So the police, they never took her in. They let her keep going back, keep going back. They waited for this to happen. I was afraid that this would happen. So I filed for an emergency eviction for them to hurry up because she set the stove on fire.

Q: When did she set the stove on fire?

A: She set the stove on fire, I want to say like July 27. She was setting things on fire. She told me I need a new stove. So this could've been prevented. I got the phone call around 7:30 [p.m.] today, and they told me about the disturbances. The police were called. The neighbor, I got multiple phone calls.. The neighbor called me and was like the police have finally arrived. I said I'm on my way, I'm waiting for my fiancé to pick me up so I can go. So when I finally got here, on my way I got the phone call, she's setting the place on fire.

Q: What does she look like?

A: She's a white woman, about 5'3", tattoos all over her body. She's 32 years old.

Q: What color is her hair?

A: Like a brunette. On no, she dyed it red. She's not skinny, she's a heavier build, about 190 pounds.

Q: Did you see her here on site when this all happened?

A: I wasn't here, no.

Q: The neighbor saw her?

A: Yeah.

Q: What's the neighbor's name?

A: Angelique Koehler, 651-307-4631. I spoke to her [suspect] social worker. Her social worker said she has a history of fire and arson.

Q: Is she the only one that has keys to her apartment besides you?

A: Yes.

Q: And is the gas and electric turned on to the building?

A: Correct.

Q: What unit does she rent.

A: #2, second floor - where the fire started.

Witness Statement Comments

Conclusion

Case Conclusion

After examination of the fire scene, observation of fire patterns of both movement and intensity and interviews conducted, it is my opinion the fire began in the southeast corner of the structure, on the second floor. The ignition source was a cigarette lighter. The first fuel ignited was bedding or stuffed animals. The oxidant was atmospheric air. The action that brought these items together was a human act. The classification of fire cause is incendiary. This concludes my investigation and report.

Technical Review 08-07-2022 by Interim Investigator Joshua Tweed

Signature

Blank, Joseph

Lead Investigator

Signature

Date Submitted

Document Attachment List

Photo Log