



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

Investigation Report

Case

Case Details

SPFD240110001619	Tweed, Joshua	Closed	24-005-154
Case Number	Lead Investigator	Status	Name
Confidential	Undetermined	Undetermined	
Confidentiality	Disposition	Fire Cause	
01/10/2024	02:52		
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 an alarm sounding in an apartment building with smoke and fire conditions. Firefighters arrived and found smoke venting from the first and second floors. Firefighters evacuated the structure, extinguished the fire, and conducted overhaul.

The occupant stated that she awoke to the sound of a smoke detector and smoke in the apartment. She was able to open a window on the southeast corner of the apartment and climb down onto the adjacent rooftop.

Investigation revealed a roof collapse and partial front parapet collapse due to fire impingement on the structural members of the second and first floors. Heavy fire damage to interior contents located on the first, second and basement levels.

Case Background

Case Synopsis

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

Investigation Comments

Fire

Ignition Sequence

Undetermined	Storage area, other		
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Fire Cause	Area of Origin	Equipment Power Source	Equipment Portability
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Area of Origin Comments

Undetermined	Undetermined
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Heat Source	Material Ignited
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Equipment Involved In Ignition	Equipment Make	Equipment Model	Equipment Serial Number
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Fire and Smoke Spread Information

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

Weather

		7	Northwest
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Visibility	Relative Humidity (%)	Wind Speed (Mph)	Wind Direction
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26.0	0	No	
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Temperature (Fahrenheit)	Precipitation	Lightning	Information Obtained From Weather
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Overcast skies

Weather Comments

Property Details (1 of 1)

Property

N/A

Name

918 University Avenue West

- Apartment 118

Address

Apt/Suite/Room

Saint Paul

Ramsey County

Minnesota

55104

City

County

State

Postal Code

\$121,000.00

\$150,000.00

\$500,000.00

Pre Fire Value

Content Loss Value

Structure Loss Value

Property Description

Area

Structure

Urban

Area Type

Area Description

Area Quality

Structure

Multifamily dwelling

Occupied

Property Use

Structure Occupancy

Yes

Operating Properly

Alarm Type

Smoke Detector Present

Smoke Detector Performance

None

Sprinkler Standpipes

Sprinkler Standpipes Performance

80

40

2

Structure Length (Ft)

Structure Height (Ft)

Structure Width (Ft)

Number Of Stories

Number Of Units

Ordinary

Type III

StructureMaterial_Masonry

Construction Type

Structure Type

Structure Material

Basement

Brick/Stone

Flat

Asphalt

Foundation

Exterior Covering

Roof Type

Roof Material

An interior exam of the building was not permitted. An aerial view of the damage was attained with the use of an elevated platform from a nearby ladder truck.

Evidence of fire damage to the second floor units was observed with the most severe damage at the southern end of both the east and west apartments. The roof had collapsed onto the second floor and a clear view of items located within was difficult to surmise.

Interior Exam

The investigation began on the southern elevation and continued clockwise noting area of fire related damage. Elevated master streams were being operated at the time of the investigation and the buildings roof supports had given way leading to a complete collapse of the roof onto the second floor. No entry to the building was permitted as well as a cordoned off perimeter for safety, due to falling structural components of the buildings façade.

The rear (south) of the brick building includes an exterior wooden staircase that accesses both the east and west second story apartments through a porch. Soot stained windows on the western units were observed. The windows on the eastern unit were missing with evidence of fire damage to the upper third of the window casings. Fire damage due to venting fire out of these windows was evident on the eaves and soffits above the porch.

The first floor door leading into the business was in the open position with a hose line running on the ground entering the structure. Unable to determine if the door was forced open or not due to unsafe conditions of the building and the potential for an addition building collapse.

The buildings electric meter was located on this side and, from the vantage point of this investigator, it appeared to be undamaged. The service drop was found to be undamaged. The utility company had, at the time, severed power to the structure at the pole.

A second door located on this elevation more towards the east was found to be in the closed position. Soot accumulation to the brickwork located to the lower right corner of the back of the building was observed.

Moving to the west facing elevation, broken windows were observed above the man door and second of three lookout windows with smoke staining. All of the second floor window were broken out. This was most likely due to the complete collapse of the roof onto the second floor. The service entrance for the natural gas meter was located to the south of the first floor entrance. This area appeared to be undamaged at the time of the investigation. Windows to the first floor business were broken and clear sight into the interior was available. From the vantage point of the investigator, it appeared that the second floor joists' were badly fire damaged and had collapsed into the first floor.

The investigation moved to the front of the building which is the north facing elevation. The front parapet wall and awning were missing and a collection of brick and building materials were discovered on the front sidewalk and roadway. This was due to a wall collapse and subsequent roof collapse. Smoke and fire damage was observed on the first and second floor window openings. A view of the interior was possible at the street level and evidence of fire damage to the structural members of the first floor ceiling and second floor joists' was observed.

Exterior Exam

Alarm and Security Services

None	Yes		
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

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Electrical Status

Electrical Entrance

	Natural	Xcel Energy
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Fuel Status

Fuel Type

Fuel Company

	City of Saint Paul Municipal Water
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Water Status

Water Company

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Telephone Status

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Utility Comments

Insurance Information (1 of 1)

FARMERS		
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Company

Claim Number

Policy Number

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Effective Date

Expiration Date

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Maximum Coverage For Structure Loss

Maximum Coverage For Content Loss

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Insurance Comments

Witness Statement (1 of 4)

Witness Statement

Vo	Tam	d
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Last Name

First Name

Middle Name

Owner	
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Type

Employer

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Interviewed Date

Interviewed By

Interviewed By Other

3806 28th Ave. S. Apt. 410	
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Street 1

Street 2

Minneapolis	Minnesota	55406
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City

State

PostalCode

Asian	04/03/1991	
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Race

Date of Birth

Driver's License Number

Q: What items were stored in the basement level of the building?

A: Magazine and records.

Q: Have you had any recent repairs or upgrades to the building?

A: Yes, around Christmas we had the boiler serviced. It was leaking.

Q: Do you remember who serviced the boiler?

A: Centrair

Witness Statement Comments

Witness Statement (2 of 4)

Witness Statement

Guevara	Maria	
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Last Name

First Name

Middle Name

Occupant	
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Type

Employer

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Interviewed Date

Interviewed By

Interviewed By Other

918 University Ave. West Apt. #118	
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Street 1

Street 2

Saint Paul	Minnesota	55104
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City

State

PostalCode

Hispanic or Latino		
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Race

Date of Birth

Driver's License Number

Q: Can you tell me what happened last night?

A: I live alone. I had a friend living her but they are in New York.

Q: When did your friend leave?

A: Last Saturday, I was alone at the time of the fire.

Q: How did you learn about the fire?

A: I woke up from sleep at around 0145 to use the bathroom and did not notice any thing out of the ordinary. I went to sleep again. At 0239 I woke up and smelled smoke. I called 911. I heard the alarms sounding. I tried to get out through the stairwell but there was too much smoke. I opened the back window and climbed out onto the rooftop of the next door building. I was then helped down by a neighbor.

Q: Did you have any issues with your electricity in the past?

A: The lights have been turning off and on. They have been working on the apartment.

Q: Was the heat in your apartment working at the time? Any issues with it?

A: Yes the heat was working.

Witness Statement Comments

Witness Statement (3 of 4)

Witness Statement

Lor	Pas	
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Last Name

First Name

Middle Name

Other	
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Type

Employer

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Interviewed Date

Interviewed By

Interviewed By Other

960 Oakgreen Ave.	
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Street 1

Street 2

Stillwater	Minnesota	55082
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City

State

PostalCode

Asian	01/25/1964	
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Race

Date of Birth

Driver's Liscense Number

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Witness Statement Comments

Witness Statement (4 of 4)

Witness Statement

Centraire Heating, Air Conditioning		
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Last Name

First Name

Middle Name

Other	
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Type

Employer

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Interviewed Date

Interviewed By

Interviewed By Other

6811 Washington Ave. S.	
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Street 1

Street 2

Edina	Minnesota	55439
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City

State

PostalCode

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Race

Date of Birth

Driver's Liscense Number

Company that performed the service to the boiler.

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 most likely in the basement area. The area of origin was possibly the rear southern wall area. The first fuel/material ignited was unknown. The ignition source was undetermined. The oxidant was normal atmospheric air. The action that brought these items together was undefined. The classification of fire cause is undetermined. This concludes my investigation and report.

Technical Review by J. Blank, IAAI-CFI, 2-12-24

Signature

Tweed, Joshua

Lead Investigator

Signature

Date Submitted

Document Attachment List

Photo Log