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

Investigation Report

Case

Case Details

Case Number	Lead Investigator	Status	Name
SPFD250221009482	Gregor, Robert	Closed	25-028-586

Confidentiality	Disposition	Fire Cause
Confidential	Incendiary	Intentionally Started

Start Date	Start Time	End Date	End Time
02/21/2025	07:31		

Primary Fire Department	Secondary Fire Department	Law Enforcement
Saint Paul Fire Department		Saint Paul Police Department

Case Narrative

The fire department was called to the report of a fire in a vacant commercial structure. Firefighters arrived and found light smoke showing from multiple boarded-up windows. Firefighters evacuated the structure, extinguished the fire and conducted overhaul. Command was terminated and the scene was released.

Case Background

Case Synopsis

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

Investigation Comments

Fire

Ignition Sequence

Fire Cause	Area of Origin	Equipment Power Source	Equipment Portability
Intentionally Started	Interior stairway or ramp		

Area of Origin Comments

Heat Source	Material Ignited
Undetermined	Flammable or combustible liquid, other

Equipment Involved In Ignition	Equipment Make	Equipment Model	Equipment Serial Number

Fire and Smoke Spread Information

Fire Spread Material	Fire Spread Avenue
Confined to room of origin	

Smoke Spread Material	Smoke Spread Avenue

Fire Comments

Weather

Visibility	Relative Humidity (%)	Wind Speed (Mph)	Wind Direction
		6	130

Temperature (Fahrenheit)	Precipitation	Lightning	Information Obtained From Weather
3.0	0	No	

Weather Comments

Property Details (1 of 1)

Property

Name			
Checker Board Pizza			

Address	Apt/Suite/Room
992 Arcade Street	

City	County	State	Postal Code
Saint Paul	Ramsey County	Minnesota	55106

Pre Fire Value	Content Loss Value	Structure Loss Value
$237,500.00	$1,500.00	$27,500.00

Property Description

Area

Area Type	Area Description	Area Quality
Structure	Urban	

Structure

Property Use	Structure Occupancy
Restaurant or cafeteria	Vacant

Alarm Type	Smoke Detector Present	Smoke Detector Performance
	No	

Sprinkler Standpipes	Sprinkler Standpipes Performance
None	

Structure Length (Ft)	Structure Height (Ft)	Structure Width (Ft)	Number Of Stories	Number Of Units
157		52	2	

Construction Type	Structure Type	Structure Material
Ordinary	Type III	StructureMaterial_Masonry

Foundation	Exterior Covering	Roof Type	Roof Material
Basement	Brick/Stone	Flat	Asphalt

Entering the building working from the area of no damage/fire involvement to the area of most damage. There was no noted fire damage in the basement, there was a gang of natural gas meters, all were secure and gas was shut off.

On the first floor in the former pizza restaurant/bar space there was light smoke with no fire damage, the ceiling had been removed and holes were noted in the floor above. There was no furnishings in the space.

In the alpha/bravo quadrant, the stairs leading to the second floor are located. This area had heavy fire involvement and had damage from a previous fire. Crews reported a strong odor of gasoline on overhaul. PID sampling had a strong hit for VOCs along the stairs. A sample of the stair tread and riser was taken for chemical analysis.

Examination of the second floor showed little fire damage, there was a spot fire next to some vinyl-cased windows that had been stacked against a stud wall. These were in close proximity to the stairs and the flow path of the fire in the stairs. The flow of fire gasses caused the vinyl to melt and ignite, creating a localized spot fire. The entire second floor is gutted down to bare studs, and there are several holes in areas with missing flooring.

Interior Exam

The building is located on the Northeast corner of Jenks and Arcade, with the front of the building facing west on Arcade St. The building is a vacant bar/pizza restaurant with apartment spaces above. There are two entrances located on the Alpha side of the structure with additional entrances on the Charlie and Delta sides. There are multiple boarded up windows on the second floor, along with all first floor windows being boarded up.

On arrival, light smoke was noted to be emanating from the second floor on the Delta side and Alpha side. Fire crews were in the process of removing boarded-up windows, and hoses were stretched to the interior for a fire attack.

Previous fire damage was noted on the alpha entrance to the stairs leading to the second floor. There was no noted charring on the exterior of the doorway frame. There were no noted signs of forcible entry on this door.

The Charlie, delta, and Alpha/delta doors were forced open by fire crews. The natural gas feed for the building is located on the alpha side and was previously locked. The building's electrical service had been disconnected by the power utility previously.

Exterior Exam

Alarm and Security Services

Sprinkler Standpipes	Smoke Detectors Present	Smoke Detector Locations	Fire Suppression
None	No		

Doors	Windows	Other Entrances
Closed And Locked	Closed And Locked	

Alarm Protection/Security Comments

Utilities

Electrical Status	Electrical Entrance

Fuel Status	Fuel Type	Fuel Company
	Natural	Xcel Energy

	City of Saint Paul Municipal Water

Witness Statement (1 of 4)

Witness Statement

Last Name	First Name	Middle Name

Type	Employer
911 Caller	

Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other

Street 1	Street 2

City	State	PostalCode
Saint Paul	Minnesota	

Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense Number

Plumes of smoke coming
PLUMES OF SMOKE COMING OUT OF BOARDED UP WINDOWS ON THE 2ND FLOOR. VERY HAZY/SMOKY IN AREA.

Witness Statement Comments

Witness Statement (2 of 4)

Witness Statement

Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
Tuftee	Lee	

Type	Employer
Fire Department	

Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other

Street 1	Street 2
645 Randolph Ave	

City	State	PostalCode
Saint Paul	Minnesota	55102

Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense Number

Fire Captain of E-7 reported strong odor of gasoline in stairway and building during overhaul.

Witness Statement Comments

Witness Statement (3 of 4)

Witness Statement

Martinez	Jason	
Last Name	First Name	Middle Name

Fire Department	
Type	Employer

Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other

645 Randolph Ave	
Street 1	Street 2

Saint Paul	Minnesota	55102
City	State	PostalCode

Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense Number

Captain of Squad 1.
Arrived and found smoke showing from boarded up windows. Crew forced doors on C/D side of building.
Found active fire in stairway leading from the 1st to 2nd floor. Unlocked front door/deadbolt. Noted that there was no burglar bracing or other reinforcement to front door.

Witness Statement Comments

Witness Statement (4 of 4)

Witness Statement

Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
Moua	Neng	Hue

Type	Employer
Owner	

Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other

Street 1	Street 2
11 Wheelock Pkwy E	

City	State	PostalCode
Saint Paul	Minnesota	55117-3933

Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense Number

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 stairway from the first to second floor. The area of origin was the path of the stairway. The first fuel/material ignited was most likely a flammable liquid, most likely gasoline. A sample of stair tread was taken for analysis. The ignition source was most likely an open flame from an incendiary device. The oxidant was normal atmospheric air. The action that brought these items together was an intentional human act. The classification of fire cause is incendiary. This concludes my investigation and report.

Technical Review by J. Tweed, on 03.21.2025

Signature

Gregor, Robert		
Lead Investigator	Signature	Date Submitted

Document Attachment List

Photo Log