



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		
Fire Cause	Area of Origin	Equipment Power Source	Equipment Portability
Area of Origin Comments			
Undetermined		Undetermined	
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

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

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			

Insurance Information (1 of 1)

FARMERS		
Company	Claim Number	Policy Number
Effective Date	Expiration Date	
Maximum Coverage For Structure Loss	Maximum Coverage For Content Loss	
Insurance Comments		

Witness Statement (1 of 4)

Witness Statement

Vo	Tam	d
Last Name	First Name	Middle Name

Owner	
Type	Employer

Interviewed Date	Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other

3806 28th Ave. S. Apt. 410	
Street 1	Street 2

Minneapolis	Minnesota	55406
City	State	PostalCode

Asian	04/03/1991	
Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense 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 Liscense 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	
Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
Other		
Type	Employer	
Interviewed Date	Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other
960 Oakgreen Ave.		
Street 1	Street 2	
Stillwater	Minnesota	55082
City	State	PostalCode
Asian	01/25/1964	
Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense Number

Witness Statement Comments

Witness Statement (4 of 4)

Witness Statement

Centraire Heating, Air Conditioning		
Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
Other		
Type	Employer	
Interviewed Date	Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other
6811 Washington Ave. S.		
Street 1	Street 2	
Edina	Minnesota	55439
City	State	PostalCode
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