

THE WESTHOME SIREN

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Candles to blame in fire

A fire destroyed a home, taking a kitten's life.

"I've got to go and search for the kitten," said Mary McIntyre, who lived in the home with her husband.

The family was not injured in the blaze, reported at 3:21 p.m.

Mary said she left candles burning in her home before going outside.

"There wasn't much wax in them," she said. "I figured they would just go out...I don't know how it could have caught on fire – unless the glass broke."

Mary said she didn't smell smoke when she went into the house. But soon, she smelled a strange odor coming from the room with the candles. She opened the door.

"The minute I walked in, it was black in there. I ran over to my friend's house and asked her to call 9-1-1," she said.

Firefighters arrived within six minutes and encountered a "fully involved fire...in the roof, windows and doors," said Chief Milton Burl.

"The fire's cause has been tentatively linked to candles. With the popularity of candles, I've seen a rise in the number of candles triggering blazes. They're not misusing candles, they are just leaving them unattended," Burl said.



Chimney sparks cause sauna fire

It was one time when a sauna got far too hot. Sparks escaping through holes in a chimney caused the fire that destroyed the small sauna room behind a farmhouse, said Fire Marshal Richard Burton. No one was hurt.

Following an investigation, Burton said the chimney had several holes in the back through which sparks flew and ignited combustible material inside the sauna room.

The fire was reported by neighbors shortly before midnight.

The fire department responded with 27 firefighters and extinguished the blaze within 10 minutes. But the sauna room was fully involved in flame when the volunteers arrived and resulted in a total loss, estimated at \$4,000.

The building, located by the house, was estimated to be at least 50 years old. Firefighters prevented the blaze from spreading to surrounding property or trees.

Ten-acre fire threatens home

Seventeen-year-old Adam Calistoga dashed up Gareden Lane on his bicycle toward the field burning near his home.

"I was just over at my girlfriend's when I looked out and saw the smoke," Calistoga said as he stood watching the flames. He then quickly grabbed a shovel and began aiding firefighters as flames burned a fence separating the field from his family's yard.

The 10-acre field ignited while neighbor, Wilfred Brimley, worked on his pump. "He had a wrench on the wellhead and was turning it," said Daniel Boone, fire marshal for the fire department. "The wrench shorted against a wire that sparked, setting the grass on fire."

A breeze spread the blaze that destroyed Brimley's pumphouse across the sagebrush-covered land dotted with small haystacks and fence posts.

Firefighters protected homes that were threatened by the fire.



Want to know more about candle safety? See tips on page 2.

Two boys face charges of first-degree arson. See story on page 3.

12-year-old boy is hero! See story on page 4.

Candle safety is everyone's job

Follow these tips to be safe when using candles.

- **Blow it out before you go out!** Stay in the same room with burning candles, and never leave them burning unattended. Always make sure candles are blown out before leaving home or going to bed.
- **Keep candles away from things that can burn.** Keep candles at least one foot away from curtains, upholstered furniture, greenery, decorations and other flammable items. Use a sturdy metal, glass or ceramic candleholder.
- **Don't put candles under shelves.** There is a lot of heat above a burning candle. Make sure there's at least three feet between a candle and any surface above it.
- **Place candles out of reach of children and pets.** Many candle fires are started when pets knock them over or when children touch or play with them.
- **Keep candle wicks trimmed to one-quarter inch.** Trimming keeps the candle from smoking.



- **Avoid candles with items that can burn embedded in them, such as twigs, flowers or leaves.** These items can ignite and even explode, causing a fire.

Hillside 'firestorm' destroys home

Fire crews kept watch all night in the hills above Siuslaw Boulevard after children playing with legal fireworks started a neighborhood fire, destroying a city volunteer's home and injuring a firefighter.



The home sustained more than \$500,000 damage. Several spot fires began after the residential blaze was reported around 5:55 p.m. Friday, and more than 30 firefighters swarmed the area to keep other homes and yards from going up in flames.

A 10-year-old boy and his friend apparently were lighting legal fireworks in the presence of an

adult supervisor in the middle of the street when the mishap occurred.

The 10-year-old allegedly tossed a "ground bloom" device into the air. It landed in nearby juniper bushes, which are extremely flammable. The device exploded and quickly ignited the bushes, sending flames racing toward a neighbor's house.

It got into the eaves of the house, then shattered a living room window and it got inside.

Firefighter Jamie Lynn was taken to Valley Hospital after he was electrocuted while on a ladder fighting the fire at the house.

The fire chief said he was unsure of any criminal charges in the case. Police said the incident remains under investigation.

The fire chief underscored the danger of using fireworks in urban/wildland interface areas, saying it's just not worth it. "Legal fireworks do not necessarily guarantee safe use," he said.

Firefighters on scene for four hours at house fire

Twenty-three firefighters, including 13 volunteers, battled a house fire for four hours. The occupant of the house wasn't home when the flue fire ignited.

The fire chief said, "It was a tough fire because of where it was located. The fire started in wood shingles, which were covered with plywood sheeting under tin roofing." Firefighters had to tear off the covering materials to get to the wood shingles to extinguish the fire.

The estimated value of the house was \$60,000 and the estimated damage was \$40,000.

The fire chief said the probable cause of the fire was an improperly installed wood stove.

Of the 23 firefighters involved, only one received an injury, and it was a burn of the left wrist.

The fire chief had high praise for the volunteers as well as the paid firefighters. He said, "I don't know where we'd be without those important volunteers."

Arson probe leads to 2 boys



A tip from an alert citizen helped fire officials catch two boys in connection with a blaze set behind a local store.

Police

picked up the two, ages 12 and 13, Tuesday evening at the fire station. The boys were accused of first-degree arson, a felony, and are students at the middle school.

The incident began shortly before noon Tuesday. Firefighters believed they made the initial 9-1-1 call about the fire, responding to smoke pouring from the back of Jim's Deli. The fire marshal said he looked out a station window, saw a huge plume of black smoke, and thought the fire had already reached the building's

roof. He initially thought that a heater unit on the building's roof had started the fire. However, the fire was confined to the north side of the building near the dumpsters.

Firefighters had the blaze extinguished within minutes. Smoke left a seared black mark on the side of the building.

Officials said an investigation indicated that someone had set an old plastic sunglasses display on fire.

The fire caused some \$2,000 damage to the Jim's Deli building.

Investigators had no leads until shortly before 5 p.m. when a woman stopped by the fire station and told officials she'd just seen two boys spraying paint on the back of the Deli and lighting the wet paint on fire.

Officials started searching north of Butteville Road, in and around the Deli. They noted that tips don't

always amount to anything, but this one was different.

"They had established a high potential for burning another building," the fire marshal said. "I knew they couldn't have gotten far."

Fire officials then spotted two boys leaving the hardware store with cans of spray paint. The boys also had a cigarette lighter.

Hot ashes start fire

A local resident put hot ashes from his woodstove in a paper sack and then put the sack on his back porch, resulting in a fire in his doublewide trailer.

He was burned slightly, and the home was damaged.

Gregory Hines, 44, carried his mother to safety before returning to fight the fire. As he did so, his arms were burned, but he refused medical treatment, firefighters said.

Hines' home was at the top of a hill at the end of a long driveway. The driveway had not been cleared of snow. Firefighters were lucky the temperatures stayed cold enough during the night to keep the snow firm.

"It got down to about 15 degrees last night, which was a good thing," firefighters said. "If it hadn't been so cold I don't know if our trucks could have made it up that hill."

Firefighters said the investigation revealed the fire started in the home's mud room, and spread to the adjacent bathroom before they brought it under control about 30 minutes after they arrived.

Heater sparks house fire

An early-morning house fire that broke out when a wall heater ignited a suitcase caused an estimated \$50,000 damage.

According to the fire department chief, two crews and an ambulance responded to the report of a fire around 4:30 a.m.

Two women, the homeowner and a guest, were in the house when the fire broke out.

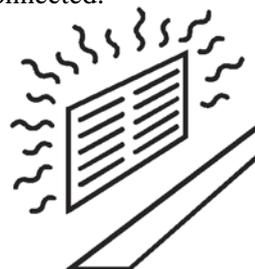
The fire chief said the fire began when the wall heater—a natural gas furnace—ignited a suitcase that was sitting too close.

Although the blaze was extinguished within five minutes, the

room where the fire originated was destroyed.

Both occupants were treated for smoke inhalation. The homeowner was taken to Valley Hospital for additional treatment and released.

The home had two smoke alarms that didn't activate. One didn't have a battery in it, and the battery in the other smoke alarm wasn't connected.



Juvenile charged in blaze

Police have arrested a 13-year-old youth and are investigating four other juveniles in connection with a fire that destroyed three Beautiful Interiors furniture buildings.

Detective Quincy Jones said the juveniles left a burning cigarette butt behind the business before they went to a local park. He said the furniture store received a tip from a resident who claimed to know who started the fire.

The tip led investigators to the 13-year-old youth. Police spoke with the teen, determined he had been responsible for the blaze and arrested him on a charge of reckless burning.

He was placed in the juvenile detention center. Jones said the other four will face charges when the investigation is complete.

The fire started around 1:03 a.m. Firefighters found a warehouse and secondary showroom in flames. A repair building also burned.

It took 36 firefighters from three neighboring communities two hours to bring the fire under control.

Safety with cigarettes

Follow these tips for staying safe around cigarettes.

- .. **Use proper ashtray** - Make sure it is heavy, cannot tip over and is made of material that will not burn. Never leave a cigarette burning down on the edge of a table or shelf.
- .. **Keep matches and lighters away from children.**
- .. **Never smoke in bed or when feeling drowsy.**

Boy rescues brother in smoke-filled home

A 12-year-old boy rescued his toddler brother from their smoke-filled home last week.

Lane Frost and another brother were playing basketball when they smelled smoke. Lane went inside to the bedroom where they had put 18-month-old Brent down for his nap less than a half hour earlier and brought him outside.

The accidental fire caused about \$50,000 damage, mostly due to smoke damage, said fire officials. It started about 3 p.m. in the kitchen when a toaster jammed and ignited

books and papers touching the appliance.

Fire officials said the boys' parents took them to their doctor for an examination, but they were not visibly injured.

The fire had spread "to every crack and crevice" of the 125-year-old, wood-framed, two-story farmhouse, said the fire chief.

The fire appeared to be an accident, caused by combustibles placed too close to a heating source.

Home severely damaged by fire

Complications from a wall-mounted electrical heater in a residence led to a fire which caused an estimated \$15,000 damage.

Fifteen firefighters, three engines, and one rescue vehicle responded to the blaze, which damaged the house, but resulted in no injuries.

The house was unoccupied at the time of the fire. The fire started in the bedroom wall, directly behind a wall-mounted electrical heater.

"(The heater) had something to do with it," said the fire chief. He was unsure whether the fire started due to combustible items placed too close to the heater or a malfunction within the unit, but said the blaze "definitely started at that electrical unit."

The flames were confined to the bedroom where the fire began and the exterior wall of the room, which allowed firefighters to extinguish the fire quickly, but smoke damaged the entire home.

Police officers hurt in rescue

Two police officers were treated for smoke inhalation after they entered a smoke-filled home in an attempt to find a child whose mother later remembered the boy was at a friend's house. The officers, who arrived at the fire scene before firefighters, were treated for smoke inhalation. They

entered the home four times before the mother remembered her son was not at home.

The fire, which was contained to one room, was caused by bedding too close to a baseboard heater. The fire department estimated the damage at \$15,000 to \$20,000.