



ARCATA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

631 NINTH STREET, ARCATA, CA 95521-6204
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Boxes Blamed in Early Morning Fire

Arcata, CA- (November 1, 2014)- At approximately 6:20 this morning, Arcata Fire Protection District responded to a possible structure fire in the 300 block of Shirley Blvd. When the first crew arrived on scene they found grey smoke pushing from the eaves at the front of the house. The first crew prepared for a fire attack on the unoccupied dwelling. As the second engine arrived, the firefighters made entry into the structure through the garage access door. "Once we made access into the house the smoke was slightly pushing out the door but it was extremely thick. It was floor to ceiling thick, we couldn't see anything" explained Firefighter Evan Gibbs. The crew conducted a search to confirm that the house was not occupied and as they moved further into the house, the heat became more intense. They found the source of the fire approximately eight feet from the front door and quickly had the fire under control. As other crews arrived on scene they provided ventilation by cutting a hole in the roof to remove the smoke from the structure. After about five minutes of aggressively attacking the fire it was knocked down. The fire was completely extinguished within another 15 minutes.

The structure was unoccupied at the time of the fire; however it appeared people were starting to move into the house. The cause of the fire was determined to be cardboard boxes that were stacked on a floor heater. There were smoke alarms in the house but it is unclear at this time if they were working when the fire occurred. The smoke caused major damage throughout the interior of the house. Structural damage is minimal, but the approximate property loss is \$80,000 to \$100,000. There were no injuries to firefighters.

Arcata Fire Protection District had four engines, one rescue, 15 firefighters and one chief officer working the fire. Humboldt Bay Fire provided one engine and a Battalion Chief to help cover the Mad River area. Arcata Police Department was on scene to assist with traffic control.

"Research shows that heating equipment is involved in more than 62,550 U.S. home structure fires per year, with associated loss of more than 516 civilian deaths, more than 1,595 civilian injuries and roughly \$924 million in direct property damage per year" explains Fire Prevention Specialist Jenny Williamson. With these staggering statistics,



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AFPD recommends some simple home heating safety tips, so residents can help keep their families safe this winter.

- Install smoke alarms in **every** bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home so that when one sounds, they all sound. Test smoke alarms at least once a month.
- Be sure your home has both photoelectric and ionization smoke alarms or combination ionization and photoelectric alarms, also known as dual sensor smoke alarms.
- Practice your home fire escape drill.
- Have your chimney inspected each year by a qualified professional and cleaned if necessary.
- Use a sturdy fireplace screen.
- Allow ashes to cool before disposing. Dispose of ashes in a metal container.
- Space heaters need space. Keep all things that can burn, such as paper, bedding or furniture, at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Turn portable heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.
- Plug power cords only into outlets with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord.
- Inspect for cracked or broken plugs or loose connections. Replace before using.
- Install and maintain a carbon monoxide alarm in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home.
- Never use an oven to heat your home.

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