



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fire Chief

DATE: January 24, 2012
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Smoke Detectors Awake Family, Man Arrested for Arson

Date/Time: January 24, 2012, 1:50 a.m.
Location: 8200 block of Alston Avenue, Hesperia
Incident: Residential Structure Fire

Summary: San Bernardino County firefighters responded to an early morning residential structure fire in the City of Hesperia. Initial reports stated there were occupants still inside the residence. Upon arrival, firefighters found the garage fully involved in fire and quickly spreading into the attic of the 2,500 sq. ft. home.

Firefighters located two elderly females unharmed, one an invalid, to the rear of the residence, both stating there was still a man inside the home along with several animals. Firefighters immediately searched the home for the male subject and animals. They were unable to locate the subject inside the home. It was later learned that the male resident had safely self-evacuated before firefighter arrival. Firefighters rescued two dogs from the burning home. Unfortunately two dogs had already perished in the fire, along with a rabbit.

The front door of the home was dead bolted and blocked by debris from the inside, hindering firefighter efforts. Despite various obstacles, approximately 17 firefighters from San Bernardino County Fire extinguished the blaze in about 25 minutes and kept the fire contained to the garage and adjacent bedroom.

There were no injuries; however, due to the freezing temperatures, one of the elderly females was transported by County Fire Paramedics to Desert Valley Hospital in Victorville for evaluation. The residence sustained moderate damage, with damage estimates at \$100,000. A vehicle inside the garage was destroyed.

Investigators determined the fire started inside the garage. The cause of the fire remains under investigation by San Bernardino County Fire Investigators and the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Arson/Bomb unit. The 50 year old male resident has been arrested by the Sheriff's Department for Arson.

The peak time for home fire fatalities is between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when most families are sleeping. Smoke alarm maintenance is a simple, effective way to reduce home fire deaths. Children and senior citizens are most at risk, and a working smoke alarm can give them the extra seconds they need to get out safely. Non-working smoke alarms rob residents of the protective benefits home fire safety devices were designed to provide. The most commonly cited cause of non-working smoke alarms: worn or missing batteries. Changing smoke alarm batteries at least once a year, testing those alarms and reminding others to do the same are some of the simplest, most effective ways to reduce deaths and injuries. **In this case, smoke detectors are being credited in saving the lives of the two elderly females. Both stated several smoke alarms in the home activated and alerted them of the fire.**

Photos are available at www.sbcfire.org, under latest news.

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