FIRE INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

TO: Chief Kevin Jacobs
FROM: Charles Huddleston, Fire Investigator
SUBJECT: Structure Fire at 3333 Daleford
Incident # 2012-3753
Date: December 18, 2012
DATE: February 27, 2013

FIRE INCIDENT SUMMARY

On Tuesday, December 18, 2012 at 0400 hours, the Shaker Heights Fire Department responded to a structure fire at 3333 Daleford Road. This was a normal response by fire crews, however, there was a delay in the fire department getting an address for the fire as the 911 caller called from a phone which routed the call to CECOMS, who had to determine where the call was coming from prior to forwarding it to the proper agency. Also, the caller was assisting occupants out of the home and it took some time for the dispatcher to get the information from the caller.

Photo of northeast corner of structure courtesy of neighbor prior to fire department arrival
Photo DSCF3124
On arrival of fire crews, heavy fire was noted from the first floor windows and sliding glass doors on the north and east side of the structure. The fire had self-vented in these areas prior to fire department arrival. Heavy smoke was coming out of second floor windows on the east and west sides that were opened by occupants to escape the fire. Four occupants were able to jump from a second floor west window to escape the fire. One occupant was able to jump from a second floor east window to escape the fire. These five occupants were transported to Ahuja Medical Center for treatment and were later admitted to University Hospitals for observation for their injuries from the fire and the jump from the second floor. Two occupants were found in a second floor north west bedroom with no signs of life. See Diagram 2012-3753-B and photos PC 180001-1 thru PC 180013-1 for location and position of victims. These two occupants were removed from the structure and eventually turned over to the Cuyahoga County Coroner Investigator.

Two firefighters were injured and transported to local hospitals. They were treated and released for their injuries.

Due to the heavy volume of fire and the number of injuries, several mutual aid fire departments were on scene and assisted with fire suppression and transporting the injured to local hospitals. The heavy volume of fire required several hours of fire suppression activity to bring under control. Due to the extensive fire damage to the structure, fire crews went to a defensive attack of the structure and set up to further protect exposures. Defensive operations continued until the fire was suppressed. Fire crews continued a fire watch on the structure while the fire investigation team documented the scene and a demolition crew arrived on scene to tear down and remove the structure the following day due to the extensive fire damage and instability of the upper floors and roof creating an unsafe structure.

THE INVESTIGATION

The Fire Investigation Unit was called to investigate the fire. An origin and cause investigation was performed. The scene was documented with photographs, sketches, and statements. Due to the instability of areas in the The Fire Investigation Unit was assisted by the Cuyahoga County Coroner Investigator and the Shaker Heights Police Department Detective Bureau.

THE EXTERIOR

In examining the exterior of the structure, this was a three-story brick residential home with a basement and a finished bedroom on the third floor attic space. The structure had all doors secure as firefighters had to force entry to all doors to gain entry into the structure except for the front (west) exterior door, which the police forced on their arrival.
The west side of the structure has windows broken out on both floors, all done by fire crews during fire suppression. Smoke staining was noted above all windows on the second floor and the northern window on the first floor. There was an entrance to the residence on the first floor with smoke staining above and around the door frame. Four occupants were able to escape the fire by jumping from a second floor window located on the northern end of the second floor. This window led to a second floor northwest bedroom. The roof on this side appeared to be intact. All fire patterns on the west side of the structure indicate that the fire traveled from inside the structure to the exterior.

The north side of the structure has windows broken out on all three floors. The windows on the second and third floors were broken by fire crews during fire suppression efforts. The western first floor window was broken by fire crews during fire suppression efforts and has smoke staining above the window frame. The two eastern first floor windows self-vented prior to the fire department arrival. Heavy smoke staining and charring was noted to the window frames and above the windows. The smoke staining and fire patterns above the most eastern window on the first floor extended to the porch/balcony above this area. Fire damage was noted to the gutters at the base of the balcony and the balcony fencing and railings. On the north wall of the balcony there was a window that was broken. This window self-vented from the fire.
This window led to the library located on the second floor. All fire patterns on the north side of the structure indicate that the fire traveled from inside the structure to the exterior.

Exterior east photo PC180015

The east side of the structure has a door and window located on the second floor northern side that leads to the balcony. This door and window led to a second floor northeast bedroom. The door and window were intact. There were six windows on the second floor southern side which led to the library. All windows were broken from self-venting during the fire. One occupant was in the library at the time of the fire and escaped the fire by going through one of these windows to the first floor roof and then jumping onto a car located in the driveway on the south side of the structure. Heavy smoke staining and charring was noted on and around the window frames. The first floor had a window on the northern side that self-vented prior to fire department arrival. Heavy smoke staining and charring was noted on and around the window frame with extension to the balcony gutters and the balcony fencing and railings. On the south side of the first floor were two large sliding glass doors that self-vented prior to fire department arrival. Heavy smoke staining and charring was noted on and around the door frames and the pull out awning located above the doors. On the south end of the east wall was an entrance to the structure. This entrance led to a living room. Smoke staining was noted above the door; however, the door and framing was intact. To the south of this door was the electrical service. The electric meter had been pulled by The Illuminating Company. Electrical lines coming to the service mast were intact, examined and determined not to be the cause of the fire. The roof on the east side had collapsed into the third floor and fire was still present in this area. All fire patterns on the east side of the exterior indicate that the fire traveled from inside the structure to the exterior.
The south side of the structure had an SUV located in the driveway at the southeast corner. This was the vehicle that an occupant jumped onto to escape the fire. Radiant heat damage was noted to the side of the vehicle facing the structure. Fire patterns indicate that the fire and heat traveled from the structure to the vehicle. On the east end of the south wall, there was an entrance to the first floor. The door was removed by fire crews during fire suppression activity. Heavy smoke staining and charring was noted above and around the door frame. To the east of this door was a window to the first floor. This window self-vented prior to fire department arrival. Heavy charring and smoke staining was noted above and around this window. On the second floor above this area, there was a window which led to the library. This window self-vented from the fire. Heavy charring and smoke staining was noted above and around this window. The rest of the windows on the first and second floor on the south side were broken out by fire crews during fire suppression efforts. Light smoke staining was noted above these windows. On the third floor was a window that self-vented during the fire. Heavy charring and smoke staining was noted above and around this window. All fire patterns on the south side of the structure indicate that the fire traveled from inside the structure to the exterior.

**THE INTERIOR**

In examining the interior of the structure, the entrance to the basement was located in the center of the structure. The staircase to the basement has no evidence of fire damage. The basement floor was flooded with several inches of water from fire suppression activity. The gas meter was located on the west wall of the basement and had no evidence of fire damage. The meter had been shut off by fire crews. The gas meter was examined and determined not to be the cause of the fire. The furnace and hot water tank were located in the southwest corner of the basement. There was no fire damage to the hot water tank or the furnace. The furnace and hot water tank were examined and determined not to be the cause of the fire. The electrical panel was located on the south end of the east wall. The main breaker had been shut off by fire crews. Several breakers in the electrical panel were in the trip position. These breakers covered several locations in the structure. There was no fire damage to the electrical panel. The electrical panel was examined and determined not to be the cause of the fire. At the base of the stairs was a hard wired smoke detector connected to an alarm system. There was no indication that the alarm...
system was activated or monitored. This smoke alarm was removed from the ceiling and placed into evidence as sample 2. There was also a mounting base for a battery operated smoke alarm, but the smoke alarm could not be located.

![Photo of fire damage in basement](Photo PC180036)

In the center of the east wall at the ceiling, there was charring on the ceiling joists around electrical conduit, electrical wiring, and a gas line that fed a gas heater located on the east wall of the first floor. Masonite on the wall had melted below this area. All electrical wiring and connections were examined and determined not to be the cause of the fire. The gas line was examined and determined not to be the cause of the fire. Fire patterns in this area identify that the fire traveled from the first floor to the basement through a void space in the basement ceiling/first floor.

![Photo of stair case to third floor](Photo PC190053)

In examining the steps to the third floor of the structure, they are located in the center of the structure and are heavily charred and unstable. The roof has collapsed into the third floor of the structure. The third floor was deemed unsafe and was, therefore, unable to be examined by fire investigators. The third floor was a bedroom and three of the occupants were in this room when the fire started. All three of these occupants were able to escape the fire by jumping out a
second floor window in the northwest bedroom. Fire patterns visible from the entrance to the staircase indicate that the fire traveled from the second floor to the third floor.

In examining the second floor, the library was located in the southeast corner of the house at the top of the stairs from the first floor. Fire crews had placed a door from one of the bedrooms over holes in the floor to make the hallway safe in front of the library. The entire room was heavily damaged by fire. The roof had collapsed into this room. This room was deemed unsafe for fire investigators to enter and was not further examined. Fire patterns in this room and the entrance to the room indicate that the fire traveled from the hallway of the second floor into the library.

To the west of the library was a bathroom. The bathroom has heavy smoke staining throughout the room and fire patterns indicate that there was intense heat in this room. All fire patterns indicate that the fire traveled from the hallway into the bathroom.

To the west of the bathroom was the master bedroom located in the southwest corner of the second floor. The master bedroom was heavily damaged by fire with smoke staining, heat, and fire damage noted throughout the room. The smoke staining continued from the bedroom.
into the master bath located in the southeast corner of the bedroom. All fire patterns indicate that the fire traveled from the hallway into the master bedroom.

North of the master bedroom was a second bedroom. This bedroom was located in the northwest corner of the second floor. Heavy smoke staining and fire patterns of intense heat were noted in this room. This was the room that four occupants were able to jump from a window to escape the fire. This room was also where two victims were found that were not able to escape the fire. Jance Reynolds was found lying on the floor underneath the south window of the west wall. Mary Paige Reynolds was found lying on the bed in the bedroom. See diagram 2012-3753-B and photos PC 180001-1 thru PC 180013-1 for location and position of both victims. Both victims had no signs of life when found and were removed from the structure and later turned over to the Cuyahoga County Coroner Investigator. All fire patterns in this room indicate that the fire traveled from the hallway into this bedroom.

East of this bedroom was a third bedroom. This bedroom was being used to store clothes and other items from the home. Smoke staining was noted throughout the room. There was a door located on the east wall of the room which led to an outside porch/balcony. This balcony was located in the northeast corner of the second floor. Fire patterns on the balcony indicate that the fire traveled from the exterior of the first floor onto the balcony. Fire patterns in the third bedroom indicate that the fire traveled from the hallway into the third bedroom.
The second floor hallway was heavily damaged by fire. The floor, the ceiling, and the walls were heavily charred. There were several areas in the wood flooring in front of the staircase going to the first floor where the fire had burned through the entire floor. All fire patterns in the hallway indicate that the fire traveled from the first floor staircase to the second floor and then to all of the rooms on the second floor.

Examining the staircase to the first floor, the staircase was heavily charred from the fire traveling up the stairs. The upper half of the staircase was more damaged than the lower and the hand rail for the staircase had burned away. On the first floor in front of the staircase was a cover to a smoke detector. The rest of the smoke detector could not be found. The smoke detector cover was collected and placed into evidence as sample 1. Fire patterns on the staircase and in the front foyer around the staircase indicate that the fire traveled from the hallway located behind the staircase into the foyer and up the stairs.
Located in the southwest corner of the first floor was the living room. The living room was heavily smoke stained and had fire patterns of extreme heat in the room. There was a door located on the east wall which led to the exterior of the structure. Fire patterns in this room indicate that the fire traveled from the foyer into the living room.

The dining room was located in the northwest corner of the first floor on the other side of the foyer. The dining room was heavily charred and smoke stained. Furniture was heavily charred in the room. Framing around the windows in this room was heavily charred. The framing around the entrance to the kitchen on the east wall of the dining room was heavily charred. Fire patterns in the dining room indicate that the fire traveled from the kitchen into the dining room.
Following the foyer east there was a small hallway. From the hallway, there was an entrance to the family room on the east wall, an entrance to a half bath on the east wall, an entrance to the kitchen on the north wall, and an entrance to the basement on the west wall. The staircase to the basement was directly under the staircase to the second floor. This hallway and framing around the entrances to the other rooms was heavily consumed by fire. The remains of a smoke detector were found at the entrance to the basement stairs in the fire debris on the floor. These remains were collected and placed into evidence as sample 3. The remains were later examined by an outside agency and determined to be the remains of an ionization smoke detector. From interviews, no smoke detector was noted to be in this area prior to the fire. There was a smoke detector on the second floor located directly above the location where it was found on the first floor. Fire had burned through the ceiling/flooring to the second floor in this area. The entire hallway was heavily consumed by fire. All fire patterns in this hallway indicate that the fire traveled from the kitchen into the hallway and then into the foyer area.

On the east side of the hallway next to the entrance to the kitchen was a half bath. The half bath had heavy smoke staining and charring on the wood framing to the door. The north wall of the bathroom was a bookcase on the other side facing the kitchen. Fire crews had pushed the bookcase into the bathroom during fire suppression. All fire patterns in the half bath indicate that the fire traveled from the hallway into the bathroom.
Proceeding north through the hallway into the kitchen, heavy fire damage was documented throughout the area. The kitchen was heavily consumed by fire. The kitchen had an open floor plan which incorporated the family room located on the east side of the structure in an “L” shaped pattern. The refrigerator was located in the southwest corner of the kitchen by the entrance to the hallway. The refrigerator was heavily consumed by fire and was examined and determined not to be the cause of the fire. The stove and microwave were located on the west wall by the entrance to the dining room. The stove and microwave were heavily damaged by fire. The stove and microwave were examined and there was no indication of cooking at the time of the fire and both appliances were determined not to be the cause of the fire. The dishwasher was located on the north wall at the east end of the countertop. The dishwasher was heavily damaged by fire and the cabinetry to the east of the dishwasher was consumed by fire. The granite countertop had cracked and collapsed in this area above the cabinetry and dishwasher. The dishwasher was examined and determined not to be the cause of the fire. In this area were the remains of a toaster. In examining the toaster it was determined it was not energized at the time of the fire and therefore not to be the cause of the fire. To the east of the countertop was a metal trash can. The trash can was sitting in front of a radiator which heated the kitchen. The contents of the trash can were completely consumed by the fire. There were two light fixtures in the kitchen. One light fixture was above the kitchen sink on the north wall. The light fixture was consumed by the fire and only wiring remained. From interviews, the occupants stated that this light fixture was not working properly and would not always work. The second light fixture was track lighting located in the center of the kitchen. This light fixture was consumed in the fire with only pieces of the track remaining. In the ceiling, only wiring remained. This light fixture was on a dimmer switch and operated independently of the other light fixture above the sink. The remains of the light fixtures were examined and there was no indication that they were involved in the cause of the fire.

On the south wall of the kitchen prior to entering the family room, was a small nook which had shelving. The shelving unit had been pushed into the half bath on the other side of the wall during fire suppression. The stool in front of this area was completely consumed by fire.
The shelving unit was heavily charred on the side facing the kitchen. The wood floor was heavily charred throughout the kitchen.

![Photo of family room from south to north-Photo PC180016](image)

In the northeast corner of the kitchen/family room, was a wood table and chairs. The table and chairs were completely consumed by the fire. A track lighting fixture was above this table. This fixture was not on a dimmer switch. The track lighting was examined and determined not to be the cause of the fire.

![Photo of family room steel joists from north to south-Photo PC180064](image)

Examining the family room, the room was heavily damaged by fire. All contents were consumed by the fire. Only the metal springs for the chaise lounge chairs remained. The wood floor was heavily charred in this room. The steel ceiling joists were sagging and separated from the floor above. The northern steel joists displayed the most sag and separation. On the center of the east wall, was a gas fed heater. This heater worked independently of the heat in the rest of the structure. In this area behind the heater, fire had passed through a void space into the basement. The heater and gas line to the heater were examined and determined not to be the cause of the fire. Above the heater, was a television attached to the wall. The television was hard wired into the electrical in the wall. The television was examined and determined not to be the cause of the fire.
All of the windows and sliding glass doors in the kitchen/family room self-vented from the fire. Based on interviews and fire patterns present in the kitchen/family room, the room flashed over prior to the occupants finding out there was a fire in the structure.

ROOM OF ORIGIN

After examining all fire patterns in the structure, the kitchen/family room was the room of origin. All patterns indicate that the fire traveled from where the kitchen and family room meet in the northeast corner of the first floor into the dining room and into the hallway off of the kitchen. Once in the hallway the fire then traveled through the hall and up the stairs to the second floor and then, eventually, the third floor. Fire patterns also indicate that the fire traveled from this northeast area east through the rest of the family room.

WITNESS STATEMENTS

After interviewing witnesses and collecting statements, the following scenario was developed. At the time of the fire, Jance Reynolds and Yvette Reynolds were asleep in their second floor southwest bedroom. Mary Paige Reynolds was asleep in her second floor northwest bedroom. Lauren Grace Reynolds, Sarah Rose Reynolds, and Kalima White were asleep in the third floor bedroom. Josiahs White was talking on the phone in the second floor library, where he was also going to sleep for the evening. Josiahs White smelled an odor of smoke and opened the door to the library and discovered black smoke coming up the stairs. He then closed the door yelling that there was a fire. Soon after his discovery of the fire, he heard other voices yelling that there was a fire. Josiahs then went out a window of the library on the second floor and jumped onto an SUV parked in the driveway and then to the ground. Josiahs then called 911 which went to CECOMS. Josiahs then went to the west side of the structure. Lauren Grace, Sarah Rose, and Kalima had left the third floor and went straight into Mary Paige’s bedroom where they met up with Jance and Yvette. All of them started to exit the structure by jumping out of the second floor window. Josiahs was outside and was trying to catch them as they jumped out the window. Sometime during this activity, dispatchers were finally able to get an address from Josiahs as the 911 call to CECOMS had remained open. Once Yvette jumped from the second floor, Jance tried to get Mary Paige out of bed and rescue her. Mary Paige was mentally handicapped and required special care. Mary Paige was able to walk without assistance, but would frequently argue and refuse help from people who tried to help her. Yvette stated that she does not remember Mary Paige verbally responding to her in the room before Yvette jumped out the window.

SMOKE DETECTORS

The information on smoke detectors in the structure was accumulated from physical examination of the structure during the investigation and from interviews of the occupants of the structure at the time of the fire. The current occupants moved into this structure at the beginning of November and stated that they never checked the smoke detectors to see if they were working since they moved into the structure.
The basement had a hard wired smoke detector (sample 2) to an alarm system. The alarm system did not appear to be operational or monitored. There was a mounting base for a battery operated smoke detector on the ceiling of the basement; however, the rest of the detector was not found. The first floor had a smoke detector located on the ceiling at the bottom of the stairs proceeding to the second floor. Only the melted cover (sample 1) to this detector was found. The second floor had a smoke detector on the ceiling in the hallway. No smoke detector remains were found in the fire debris on the second floor; however, the remains of an ionization smoke detector (sample 3) were found at the entrance to the basement, which is located directly below the holes in the second floor hallway. The third floor had a smoke detector. No remains of this smoke detector were found.

The morning of the fire, the only detector that was heard by the family was the smoke detector on the third floor that activated after the occupants were alerted to the fire by other family members and they opened the door to the third floor to get out of the structure.

**CORONER’S REPORT**

The coroner’s report states that Jance Reynolds died as a result of asphyxia by carbon monoxide (inhalation of smoke and soot). There was also documentation of thermal injuries of the head, trunk, and extremities (approximately 54% total body surface area). Jance Reynolds had a carbon monoxide level of 65 percent. Mary Paige died as a result of asphyxia by carbon monoxide (inhalation of smoke and soot). Mary Paige had a carbon monoxide level of 43 percent. There was nothing in their reports to indicate anything but accidental deaths.

**AREA OF ORIGIN**

The origin of the fire was an area where the kitchen and family room meet in the open floor plan located in the northeast corner of the first floor. Due to flashover and the amount of destruction caused by the fire, a point of origin could not be determined.
CAUSE

Based on interviews, fire patterns, and the amount of destruction caused by the fire, the cause of this fire is unintentional and undetermined at this time pending further information.

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Charles Huddleston
Fire Investigator, IAAI-CFI