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## KENNEWICK FIRE DEPARTMENT

*Dedicated to providing excellent public service and ensuring the safety and well-being of our community and one another. We live, act, and serve our community with the utmost integrity.*

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### MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: July 1, 2022  
Contact: Chad Michael, Fire Chief  
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KFD# 22-06445

[Kennewick, WA] At 8:37 a.m. on Friday, July 1, 2022, fire crews from the Kennewick Fire Department, Richland Fire & Emergency Services, and Benton County Fire District 1 were dispatched to a commercial structure fire at the Mandarin Apartments located at 3320 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. in Kennewick.

After being dispatched, the first KFD crew arrived on scene in just over 3 minutes and observed smoke coming from a fire on a second story balcony that had been mostly extinguished by onsite maintenance employees. Fire personnel from the first arriving engine deployed a fire attack hose to complete extinguishment of the fire from the exterior of the building. Later arriving fire personnel were assigned to check for fire extension inside of the apartment connected to the balcony that was on fire, as well as checking the attic space for hidden fire and neighboring apartments. Although smoke from the fire was found inside of the attic and apartment associated with the balcony fire, it was determined that no fire had extended beyond the balcony.

The onsite maintenance staff were instrumental in slowing the spread of fire and helping to keep it under control until fire crews could arrive on scene. The quick application of water by the first arriving engine crew also played a key role in preventing the fire from spreading into the connected apartment and neighboring units.

Although most of the building's occupants had self-evacuated prior to the arrival of the engine crews, fire personnel conducted a search of each apartment to ensure everyone made it safely out of the building. This search resulted in locating a 10-year-old girl that had been left home alone in an apartment located immediately next door to the incident. Fire personnel brought her safely out of the apartment and stayed with her until she could be reunited with her parents.

At the time of the incident, one occupant was asleep inside of the apartment when the connecting balcony caught fire. Unfortunately, there were no working smoke detectors inside of the apartment. The occupant was alerted to the danger by one of her dogs who started barking after the fire erupted. The sliding glass door to the balcony was open at the time of the incident and would have provided the fire with an easy access path inside of the apartment, had water not been applied quickly to control its spread.

Crews brought the fire under control within 15 minutes and firefighters remained on scene to ventilate smoke out of the building, assist with cleanup, and coordinate assistance for the apartment occupant with the Red Cross.

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**KENNEWICK FIRE DEPARTMENT**

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The cause of the fire was determined to be unintentional. The person renting the apartment related to the fire department that friends had come over to the apartment the night before and had been smoking on her balcony. KFD's Fire Investigator located cigarettes that had been extinguished in potting soil in a flower box on the apartment's balcony.

The apartment unit where the fire occurred will not be habitable until repairs are completed and the power is restored. The American Red Cross was contacted by KFD to assist with short-term housing and other essential needs.

The Kennewick Fire Department would like to remind everyone that potting soil is flammable. Cigarettes need to be extinguished and discarded using water and proper cigarette disposal canisters. Additionally, the Kennewick Fire Department would like to remind everyone to ensure operating smoke alarms are placed in all of the proper locations inside of living spaces. Properly operating smoke alarms save lives.

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