



KENNEWICK FIRE DEPARTMENT

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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: April 18, 2023
Contact: Chad Michael, Fire Chief
Phone: 509-820-0460
KFD Inc. #: 2303895 / 2303896

[Kennewick, WA] On Monday, April 17, 2023, fire crews from the Kennewick Fire Department (KFD) were dispatched to a reported structure fire at 1:28 p.m. at the Benton County Jail located at 7122 W. Okanogan Pl. in Kennewick. Initial reports indicated a smell of smoke in the building and a possible fire in a wall.

The first KFD fire crew arrived on-scene within 5 minutes of being dispatched. Facility staff informed the fire crew that the emergency backup generator had run for several hours earlier in the day, which may have caused the burning odor throughout the building. Fire personnel were escorted to the generator room where a visible orange glow was detected at the roofline, where the generator exhaust pipe exits through the roof. With this discovery, the crew laddered the building to get a closer look at the suspicious area. From the roof, crews were able to pull the roof membrane away from the exhaust pipe to discover a section of the wood roof system on fire. Crews placed water on the fire to extinguish the flames. The fire was determined to be controlled approximately two hours after their arrival on-scene.

The fire was confined to the Justice Center and did not have an impact on the jail. Employees at the Justice Center were evacuated during the incident as a precaution.

It was determined the fire was caused by the generator exhaust pipe being exposed to combustible materials after becoming superheated as a result of operating for several hours.

No civilians or firefighters suffered injuries during this incident.

As KFD fire crews were arriving on-scene at the Benton County Jail for the reported structure dispatched at 1:28 p.m., remaining KFD personnel and neighboring fire crews from Richland Fire & Emergency Services, Benton County Fire District 1, and the Pasco Fire Department were dispatched at 1:35 p.m. to a separate fire in a doublewide mobile home located at 5600 block of W. Metaline Ave. in Kennewick. Initial reports indicated the mobile home was well involved in fire and occupants may be attempting to get back inside.

The response route to the jail, was in close proximity to the mobile home fire, therefore the Kennewick Fire Department Battalion Chief diverted from the possible structure fire at the jail and placed himself on the mobile home fire. The KFD Battalion Chief arrived on scene within 2 minutes of being dispatched and found a doublewide mobile home that had a significant amount of fire coming from it.

Due to the large amount of fire coming from the home, venting propane and acetylene tanks, and the structural instability created by fire damage, the structure was determined unsafe for entry by fire personnel. As a result, responding fire crews were directed to place water on the fire from a defensive position outside of the home. Firefighters were able to quickly extinguish the fire, and it was determined to be under control within 22 minutes of the fire department's arrival on the scene. All occupants of the fire self-evacuated prior to the fire department arriving on scene.

One resident of the property was treated for smoke inhalation following an attempt to rescue three or four pets trapped inside the home. Fortunately, the patient did not require emergency transport, nor treatment at a medical facility. Unfortunately, several pets did not survive the incident, including two dogs and one ferret. No firefighters were injured during firefighting operations.

The cause of the fire is currently under investigation. Eight people are displaced as a result of this fire, as substantial damage to the home will prevent it from being re-occupied.

The Kennewick Fire Department is very appreciative of the assistance received from our emergency service partners at Richland Fire & Emergency Services, the Pasco Fire Department, and Benton County Fire District 1 that enabled all agencies to safely and effectively mitigate both fire incidents. We also appreciate the assistance provided by the Benton County PUD and our emergency service partners at the Kennewick Police Department.

The Kennewick Fire Department would like to remind business and homeowners to not only have a fire escape plan, but to practice the fire escape plan before an emergency occurs. The KFD would also like to remind everyone to get out and stay out if a fire occurs.

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