



Columbia Missouri Fire Dept.

INVESTIGATION REPORT



Unauthorized Dissemination is Strictly PROHIBITED

Headquarters: 201 Orr St. Columbia Missouri 65010



Caution Statement

This fire investigation report may contain graphic narratives and photographs depicting fire scenes, victims' injuries, and burned bodies. Please exercise caution when viewing this information.

Incident Information

Investigation Number	Date Arrival
2413468	10/20/2024

Location Information

Business Name	Address Line 1	Property Use
Winnelson	605 Nebraska Ave	Appliances

Building Status	Was the building occupied at the time of the fire	Obstacles to extinguishment?	Fire Attack Method
Occupied	No	No	Offensive

Life Safety Systems in Place

Sprinklers	Standpipes	Smoke Detectors
No	No	No

Property Information

Property Value	Contents Value	Property Loss	Content Loss
400000	100000	50000	75000

Authorization to Enter

Authority to enter
exigent

Scene Secured

Scene Secured	Manner of security	Securing Agency
Yes	Stand by	Columbia Fire Department

Weather Conditions

Weather Related

No

Investigation Initiation

Requested Date 10/20/2024	Requested Time 20:33:00	Agency Name Columbia Fire Department	Contact Person Pete Martian
Agency Name Columbia Fire Department	Contact Person Colin Wright	Phone #1 573-268-4166	

Origin and Cause

Floor Origin 1	Area of fire origin Storage area, other	Ignition point location Charlie side multiple locations	Cause of Ignition Intentional
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On, 10/20/2024 at 2049 hours, I arrived to investigate a fire at at 605 Nebraska. I arrived to find crews starting ventilation in a medium-sized warehouse. I checked in with Command and was told that I would be allowed into the building once they had clear air readings. .

The fire is located in a commercial area of town just south of Interstate 70.

The warehouse has metal siding and garage doors located on the Bravo and Delta sides that fire crews have cut to gain entry. There was still light smoke from inside the building and light smoke from the Charlie side of the structure.

Captain Noorsdy reported that they had encountered fire both inside the structure and on the exterior Charlie side of the structure.

Captian Plassmeyer reported that the building had been secured and that crews were initially unable to enter the doorway on the Alpha side as it was chained shut. Crews made access to the building by cutting the garage doors open. After they had completed this, they cut the chain on the front door, allowing access.

The Alpha side is located on the roadway side of the building. It has two doorways leading into the building, with two windows on a smaller portion of the building that protrudes out from the main structure. One door has been forced open, and the other is still intact. There is no sign of fire or ignition sources in this area.

The Bravo side has a garage door cut open by fire crews. A pickup truck with smoke damage could be seen just inside the cut door. There is smoke damage around the garage, but there are minor to no signs of heat damage.

The Charlie side of the structure has a long, lean-to structure that runs about 2/3 of the

length of the building. The lean-to has a wood frame and metal siding. It is open to the north with a gravel base. Its framing is separate from the main building. The upper portion of the building has soot staining that shows a line of demarcation where the smoke was able to exit the open portion of the lean-to.

There is more damage in this area, and what appeared to have been storage of several showers made of fiberglass that have been completely consumed by fire. A tire was located in this area, along with carpet padding, which has a mass loss from flames. The damage increased toward the Delta/Charlie corner. Personal items, including glasses, a toothbrush, food, and numerous alcohol containers, were located in this area. Across from this, clothing was found near the storage sheds. This leads me to believe this was used as an unhoused living area.

The back wall of the lean-to shows two separate V patterns on the wall. The first is near the Delta/Charlie corner, and the second is approximately 20 feet away toward the west side of the lean-to. I also located a small fire in a protected area on the far west corner of the lean-to. No obvious ignition source was found in this area.

The Delta side showed signs of increased damage toward the Delta/Charlie corner. Fire crews had cut the garage door to gain access. There is soot staining to a vent at the peak of the structure. There are no signs of fire or mass loss in this area.

I entered from the Alpha side door that had been forced by crews and began to look for signs of fire damage.

The first area was a small room located on the Alpha side, which might have been an office once. It has light smoke damage but no signs of fire damage or ignition sources.

The main warehouse, which had a small loft area on the Alpha side, showed no sign of fire; only smoke damage.

Inside the central area of the warehouse, there was a work truck, forklift, and what appeared to be storage for plumbing and HVAC supplies. The HVAC units were stacked along the Charlie wall with a PEX water pipe pallet.

There were signs of increased damage toward the Charlie/Delta corner inside the building. In this area, I observed the remains of several fiberglass bathroom fixtures that had been consumed by fire. The pallets of Pex tubing that had burned or melted pointed to this area being the most involved in the building. The skylights had burned out of the ceiling above this area. Though there was damage in this building area, no ignition source was located there. Additionally, the fire spread in this area would not have created as widespread fire as that which was located on the outside of the building.

At this time, I had the incident commander contact the Columbia Police Department and called Marshal Thomas to the scene as the fire appeared incendiary.

The first arriving crew reported heavy black smoke and fire on the Charlie side. .

Persons Involved

Type of involvement	First Name	Last Name	Address Line 1	City	State
Renter/Tenant	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	607 Nebraska Ave	Columbia	Missouri
Postal Code	Photographed in place	Significant blood present under/near victim	Autopsy requested	Autopsy completed	Body Diagram
65201	false	false	false	false	Adult

Statements

Date: 10/21/2024

Time: 07:15:00

[REDACTED] stated that he knew when he heard that there had been a fire a homeless person was involved. I asked if he had an issue with them on his property, and he responded that every day, he runs them out of the property. He frequently calls the police to have them removed. I then showed him the lean-to area and asked if the fire on the far west corner was there prior to the fire the night before, to which he said no. I asked if he had any problems with competitors that would cause them to set his property on fire, to which he said no.

I began to focus my investigation on the lean-to located on the Charlie side of the building. In this area, there appears to be at least three different ignition points along the back wall. I considered that drop-down might have caused this, but there was no evidence of drop-down being involved. At this time, The Columbia Police Department and Marshal Thomas arrived. I allowed Marshal Thomas to look around the scene before reviewing my findings to see if he agreed that there were multiple ignition locations in the lean-to. The Officers were familiar with the building as they had both been there for issues with unhoused individuals camping in the area.

I showed officers Doster and Boukezzoula the areas of origin in the lean-to. I explained that there was a lack of fuel that would have allowed fire to jump between the areas and that this fire was criminal in nature. I asked them to create a case number and ask if the Criminal Investigation Division would like to come to the scene. They contacted their Sergeant to make that phone call. I offered to help them collect evidence at the fire scene if they felt that any was needed.

Marshal Thomas then arrived in the area of the lean-to, and I showed him the protected area that had a small burn mark to the post along with the multiple V patterns on the wall and the post of the building. He offered that it might have been an older fire if the area had been used as a camping spot for the unhoused.

During the uploading of the pictures taken that night, they were accidentally erased. The SD card was taken to the Boone County Sheriff's Cyber Crimes Unit, and they were recovered, but it did affect the quality and size of the pictures. .

Hypotheses

Hypothesis
Multiple fires were purposefully set in the lean-to of the building.

Conclusion - The fire is incendiary in nature and was set as retaliation by unhoused individuals against the property owner. The fire was set in multiple areas outside the building along the Charlie side..

Departure Information - I cleared the scene in service and returned to fire administration to fill out a fire loss notification and begin a suspicious fire form to share information collected with the Columbia Police Department. .

Fire Incidents

Address	Incident Date/Time	Incident #	Officer in charge	Status
509 NEBRASKA AVE, COLUMBIA, MO, 65201	Oct 20, 2024 20:16:07	2413468	SIMMONS, JOSEPH	Incomplete

Evidence Items

Description	Location	Status	Evidence Collected By	Signature
Photo log daytime				
Photo log				

Investigation Signatures

Investigator Signature



Cal

Records Custodian

Unsigned