



Ocean County Fire Marshal's Office (NJ)

INCIDENT REPORT

Official Law Enforcement Report - Unauthorized Dissemination is Prohibited

Incident Type: Fire / Accidental

Agency Incident ID: 25-016

BATS ID: 1545683

Investigation Title: 25-016

Incident Date/Time/Location

Start Date/Time

1/31/2025 23:13 Friday

Address

48 Ivy Creek Dr

City/State/Zip

Tuckerton, NJ 08087

County

Ocean County

Investigator Information

Name

Kaitlyn M Freeman

Phone

732-370-7360

Email

kfreeman@co.ocean.nj.us

Title

Asst. Fire Marshal

Badge Number

1974

Property Use or Target Information

Type

Residential

Subtype

1 (Single Family) or 2 Family Dwelling

Status

Occupied And Operating



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Scene Details

Miscellaneous Information

Wind Speed/Direction

10 MPH /

Temperature

51F

Precipitation Amount

1.00 Inches

Latitude

39.593704

Longitude

-74.378818



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Person/Organization Information

Name

GIARDINA, MICHAEL

DOB

■■■■■ 937

Sex

M

Juvenile

No

Race

White

Ethnicity

Non-Hispanic

Age at time of Incident

87



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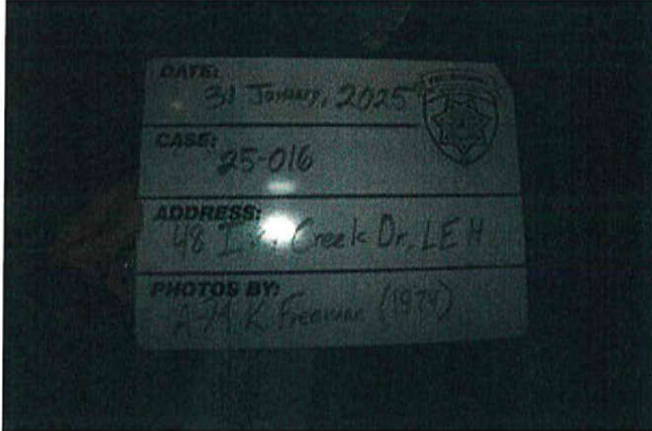
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Attachments

Filename	Description	Date
7D_A8418.JPG	Case Board	1/31/2025



7D_A8419.JPG	Front of House	1/31/2025
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7D_A8449.JPG

Area of Origin - Sun Room

1/31/2025



7D_A8458.JPG

Ash Tray - Sun Room

1/31/2025





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7D_A8468.JPG

Area of Origin - Top of Table

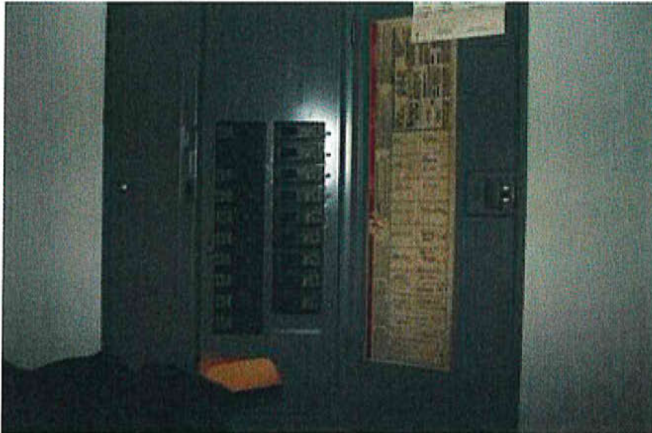
1/31/2025



7D_A8482.JPG

Electrical Service Panel - Garage

1/31/2025





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7D_A8487.JPG

Discarded Cigar Canister

1/31/2025



7D_A8489.JPG

Discarded Cigar Canister - Area of Origin

1/31/2025





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Narrative(s)

Title

Synopsis

Author

Kaitlyn Freeman

7323707360

kfreeman@co.ocean.nj.us

Description

On Saturday January 31, 2025 at 23:13 hours, West Tuckerton Fire Department (Station 71) responded to 48 Ivy Creek Drive, Little Egg Harbor Township for a reported electrical panel fire. Chief D'Andrea (7100) arrived on scene and conducted a 360o size-up of the structure before establishing command. Chief D'Andrea's observations found a previously extinguished fire in a sun room located at the rear of the structure where fire damage could be observed extending up into the attic. Initial reports of the fire being in the area of the electrical panel proved to be inaccurate. Upon arrival of (Engine) 7121, Chief D'Andrea ordered a crew to investigate the attic with a thermal imaging camera and a water can to ensure that there was no extension of fire that had been missed. The weather at the time of the fire was rainy with .3" of precipitation, 51oF, 96% humidity, and a wind speed of 10 mph, gusts of 20 mph, coming out of the southwest.



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Title

Action Taken

Author

Kaitlyn Freeman

7323707360

kfreeman@co.ocean.nj.us

Description

On Saturday January 31, 2025 at 23:25 hours, the Ocean County Fire Marshal's Office was requested to 48 Ivy Creek Dr, Little Egg Harbor for an origin and cause fire investigation. Assistant Fire Marshal Kaitlyn Freeman (1974) and Assistant Fire Marshal Zachery Sharp (1973) responded to the scene, arriving at 23:44 hours. AFM K. Freeman obtained witness statements (see attached statements), conducted overall scene photography, and together with AFM Sharp processed and documented the scene.

The Ocean County Fire Marshal's Office was cleared from the scene at 01:13 hours. The home was turned back over to the home owner, Michael Giardina. All tools, equipment, and personal protective gear was decontaminated upon completion of the investigation.



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Description

Author

Kaitlyn Freeman

7323707360

kfreeman@co.ocean.nj.us

Description

48 Ivy Creek Drive, Little Egg Harbor is a 1-story, wood frame (Type 5) residential dwelling built in 2005. The wood frame structure was constructed utilizing the platform method with a concrete block foundation. The exterior of the structure consists of white vinyl siding. The gable roof covering consists of dark asphalt shingle. The front of the structure, or A side, faces a north west direction. Going forward, the remaining sides of the building will be labeled as B, C, and D clockwise sequentially from the A side. The electric service enters the structure on the B side (East) of the building.

Exterior observations found no damage to the structure. The back door to the sun room on the C side of the structure was identified in the "Open" position. The homeowner propped open the door as a means to ventilate the sun room when he extinguished the fire.

Interior observations entering from the garage showed no sign of fire or smoke damage. Moving into the sun room at the rear of the structure there was a notable three dimensional burn pattern contained to the immediate left corner which extended from a foldable table top up into the attic where damage was minimal. Located above the ceiling over the burn pattern was electrical wiring which was damaged as a result of the fire.



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Scene Examination

Author

Kaitlyn Freeman

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Description

The fire scene examination was conducted using the systematic approach which is known as the scientific method as discussed in the 2021 Edition of NFPA 921: "Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations" and the 2022 Edition of NFPA 1033: "Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator". The seven steps of the scientific method are; recognize the need, define the problem, collect data, analyze the data, develop hypotheses, test the hypotheses and select a final hypothesis. The examination progressed from outside to inside and from areas suspected of having the least damage to areas of greater damage with an emphasis on recognition, identification, and analysis of fire and heat patterns.

A specific examination of the electrical panel, located in the garage on the D side of the structure, found two breakers, breakers nine (9) and fourteen (14), to be in the tripped position (see Service Panel Documentation). Both of which were fifteen (15) AMP Square D circuit breakers. The breakers were found to be tripped as a result of fire impingement from the area of origin located below the wires.

A specific examination of the wires found above the suspected area of origin, in the sunroom indicated the damage to be a result of fire impingement as the insulation on the wires majorly burned and melted away. The damage to the wiring within was only secondary damage, ruling them out as a source of ignition.

A specific examination of the area of origin at the foldable table in the corner of the sun room found burned debris of a small space heater, a lantern, and lightweight combustibles located on the table. These items appeared to have been damaged as a result of the fire.

A specific examination of the wiring that was found on top of the table was found to be connected to the remaining motor on the table which belonged to the debris of a space heater. The damage to the wires can be determined to be a result of fire damage from its close proximity to the area of origin. The wire was not plugged into the exterior receptacle found adjacent to the area of origin as the receptacle was undamaged, ruling out the wiring and the receptacle as a possible source of ignition.

A specific examination of the remains of the heater motor housing found damage, charring, and burn patterns to be consistent with what you would expect to see with a fire originating outside of the unit. All notable damage was found to be a result of the fire, thus ruling it out as a possible source of ignition.

A specific examination of the lantern found it to be decorative and not filled with oil. The damage, charring, and burn patterns are found to be inconsistent with what you would see of a fire originating from the exterior of the lantern. This rules it out as a possible source of ignition.

A specific examination of the burn patterns on the foldable table found the burning and charring coming from the top down as there was minor damage to one of the legs which was determined to be a result of drop



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down. This rules out that the fire attacked from the floor up.

A specific examination of the table itself identified a protected area with a green ring around the perimeter indicative of a wide cylindrical container. An "OFF" brand candle was on the floor at the base of the table. AFM K. Freeman and AFM Sharp attempted to line the candle up with the outline on the table, however, it did not match.

Mr. Giardina stated that out of fear he removed a large metal canister from the area of origin that contained the remains of cigar butts. A specific examination of the metal canister identified heavy burning to one side of the interior of the canister. The metal canister was placed on top of the protected area on the foldable table top matching the ring outline on the table.



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Conclusion, Origin, and Cause Determination

Author

Kaitlyn Freeman

7323707360

kfreeman@co.ocean.nj.us

Description

At this time, the fire investigation is concluded. Through examination of physical evidence, including burn patterns, damage to the structure, and witness statements, AFM Sharp and AFM K. Freeman determined the area of origin to be on top of the foldable table in the corner of the sun room. This fire is classified as ACCIDENTAL. The probable cause of the fire was determined to be improperly discard smoking materials in contact with available combustible materials, specifically previously discarded cigars. Mr. Giardina stated that he last smoked at approximately 11:00 hours. No other possible ignition sources were located or identified in the area of origin.

This opinion shall remain the same pending further physical or scientific evidence presented to this investigator, which would alter the same.

The Ocean County Fire Marshal's Office cleared the fire scene at 01:13 hours, turning the building back over the homeowner.



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Title	Author
Witness Statements	Kaitlyn Freeman 7323707360 kfreeman@co.ocean.nj.us

Description

1. Michael Giardina, 48 Ivy Creek Dr, Little Egg Harbor, NJ 08087 [REDACTED]

Statement taken by AFM K. Freeman (1974), Incident Scene, January 31, 2025 23:55 hours

Mr. Giardina stated that he had been watching television when he saw flames out of the corner of his eye in the sun room. He then quickly rushed to put the fire out with pots of water. He then stated that he went to the first aid building to report that the fire had occurred before returning back to his residence to meet the fire department.

Mr. Giardina stated that he had last smoked a cigar at 11:00 that morning.

END OF STATEMENT.



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Asst. Fire Marshal - Freeman, Kaitlyn

2/11/2025

Date

Asst. Fire Marshal / Fire Investigation Coordinator, NAFI CFEI - Marks, Michael

02/11/2025

Date