



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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To: The Media

From: Karen Lindsay, Nanaimo Fire Rescue

Re: Nanaimo Fire Rescue crews participate in live burn exercise.

Nanaimo Fire Rescue firefighters and fire investigators participated in a day long exercise involving the progressive to full burn of an actual home on Wednesday.

The building, located on Westwood Road, was donated to Nanaimo Fire Rescue by the SPCA for the purpose of a training exercise. The house sits on property owned by the SPCA and in the past there were two abandoned buildings on site. Vandals have since burned down one of the buildings and as a result it was determined that the other building was prone to similar vandalism. Thereafter, Nanaimo Fire Rescue and the SPCA held discussions and mutually agreed to hold a training exercise involving a controlled burn of the structure. This provides training opportunities for Nanaimo Fire Rescue Crews while eliminating a hazard on the property.

Over the course of the day, different rooms in the house were ignited in a series of exercises to allow crews to practice and refine their skill sets while further supporting existing departmental training initiatives. In addition, fire investigators put their skills to the test to determine source and cause of blaze while crews used thermal imaging cameras to assess fire behaviour. Crews and investigators were evaluated on their effectiveness in suppressing the fires with opportunity for feedback and discussion.

According to Bob Simpson, Deputy Chief, Nanaimo Fire Rescue, "Real life scenario exercises such as this allow the crews and investigators to test themselves. It allows for a comprehensive evaluation of our abilities at all levels thereby resulting in improved service overall. In addition, we can then identify further training opportunities that could be considered. These exercises are a valuable tool in preparing for real life situations. Nanaimo Fire Rescue is very appreciative to the SPCA for donating the house for the purpose of this exercise." Another benefit to the training exercise was the shooting of video for the RCMP to support a crime stoppers piece they are currently working on.

The new compressed air foam engines were utilized throughout the day allowing the crews and investigators to see the effectiveness and efficiencies of foam in suppressing fires. Residents may see some of the foam residue for a couple of days after the exercise however the foam is environmentally friendly and although safe to touch it is recommended that people avoid doing so.