



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Recent Suspected Arson Fires

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Community Members Asked to Help Resolve and Prevent Suspicious Fires

The City of Yakima is asking community members for help in addressing a recent increase in the number of suspicious fires that have occurred in various areas of the city.

Since July 1st, 26 fires have occurred in Yakima that are suspected of being the result of arson, a number fire officials say is unusually high. The highest profile suspicious fire happened in the early morning hours of Saturday, August 11th at Fruit Packers Supply (1102 N. 16th Avenue) and caused an estimated \$20 million or more in damage. Early in the morning on the previous day, Thursday, August 10th, a fire at the same facility caused an estimated \$1 million of damage.

"The City is devoting considerable resources and is aggressively pursuing every possible lead in order to determine who is responsible for the high number of suspicious fires that have taken place so far this year," said Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler. "But the more eyes and ears that are out there helping keep our community safe the better. People are encouraged to share whatever information they may have, no matter how significant or insignificant they may think it is," said Beehler.

In addition to Yakima Fire Department ("YFD") fire investigators and Yakima Police Department ("YPD") detectives, agents from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ("ATF") are actively investigating the suspicious fires that have occurred in Yakima in 2018. Arrests have already been made in several cases.

Anyone with information about the suspicious fires is encouraged to contact YPD detectives at 575-6200 or Yakima County Crime Stoppers by calling 249-9980 or submitting a tip online at crimestoppersyakco.org. People reporting information through Crime Stoppers can remain anonymous if they prefer.

"The City is also asking everyone to be on the lookout for potential fire hazards and to report them," said Beehler. "Areas with tall, dry weeds, piles of combustible materials— those are the kinds of conditions that invite fires and need to be reported."

City Code Enforcement officers are proactively identifying potential fire hazards, working with property owners to eliminate them, and regularly issuing citations when necessary. Potential fire hazards can be reported using a computer or mobile device through the City's "Yak Back" feature on the City website at yakimawa.gov/yak-back/, by calling the Yak Back Hotline at 575-3535, by calling the City's Code Compliance Hotline at 576-6657, or by sending an e-mail to the City's Code Administration office at codes@yakimawa.gov.