

June 24, 2020

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Structure Fire in McKinleyville

(McKinleyville, CA) – June 24, 2020, 10:04 p.m. – Arcata Fire District was dispatched to a residential structure fire on Thiel Avenue in McKinleyville. Firefighters out of the McKinleyville Fire station arrived to find a single family residence with heavy fire at the rear of the structure and black smoke pushing from the front door. Firefighters were limited to fighting the fire from the front door until the second engine arrived because of an OSHA law that requires a minimum of four firefighters at scene before they can enter a burning building. Once the second engine arrived, out of the Mad River Fire station, firefighters were able to go inside to fight the fire and complete a search for occupants. The fire was controlled in approximately 10 minutes and a primary search was completed with no occupants found inside.

Battalion Chief Campbell reports, “Thankfully there was no one trapped inside. With only two firefighters on the engine, it presents a significant challenge for our staff to fight the fire from outside. We could not get to the rear of the house because the brush was eight feet tall. The firefighters were trying to fight fire in the rear bedrooms from the front porch and that is not effective. Once the second engine arrived, firefighters were able to get inside and control the fire”.

There were no injuries and the home sustained major damage. The cause of the fire is under investigation but believed to be accidental in nature. The occupant reported electrical issues in the area where the fire started.

As firefighters were committed to the fire, another 911 call was received in the Arcata area. Arcata Fire had to request Samoa Fire respond to the call because all of the Arcata engines were committed to the fire.

Arcata Fire thanks Blue Lake, Westhaven, and CAL FIRE Trinidad for their assistance at the fire and thanks Samoa and Fieldbrook for covering stations.

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