



Arson suspected for Te Mata Peak

An arsonist was probably responsible for a fire which damaged a Hawkes Bay landmark. Police think an accelerant was used to fuel the big scrub fire at Te Mata Peak near Havelock North, in February.

Photo FOTOPRESS/John Cowpland.

House gutted

This fire broke out just before lunch on December 21 in Swanson, Auckland.

It was unusual because the occupants were home at the time, daylight hours. We arrived in just under seven minutes.

Two adults, one baby and several children escaped. One cat died at the scene under a bed. Even the floors in one room were destroyed by the fire. Only one scorched photo album survived.

Henderson 657, Waitemata 671 and Glen Eden 641 responded. Fire safety officer Roy Warren investigated the cause of the fire.

Story/photos station officer Graeme Quensell, Silverdale.



Kitchen fire claims two young lives

Seven days before we launched the Keep Looking When You're Cooking kitchen fire campaign, two youngsters died in a fire started by unattended cooking.

Auckland chief fire safety officer Murray Binning says the incident underlined many major home fire safety messages.

"Unattended cooking, smoke alarms, speed of fire, escape plans...everything that could go wrong here went wrong. With tragic consequences."

An eight-year-old girl and her 10-year-old brother died as a result of the Papatotoe fire in February. An 18-year-old woman had put a pan of oil on the stove to prepare breakfast, and then went to have a shower.

The oil ignited and the fire spread rapidly throughout the house, which was gutted. The speed of the fire was such that when a station officer happened to drive by just 20 minutes earlier, nothing appeared to be wrong.

The woman, a 16-year-old boy and their step-father escaped, but the fire claimed the life of the young girl, and the boy died later in hospital.

Manukau deputy chief fire officer Andy Clarkson says the first crew to arrive, Papatotoe, was

alerted by on-lookers that two children were still inside. Flames were belching from the window of the bedroom they were in, and two firefighters climbed in with a high pressure delivery. They brought the youngsters out.

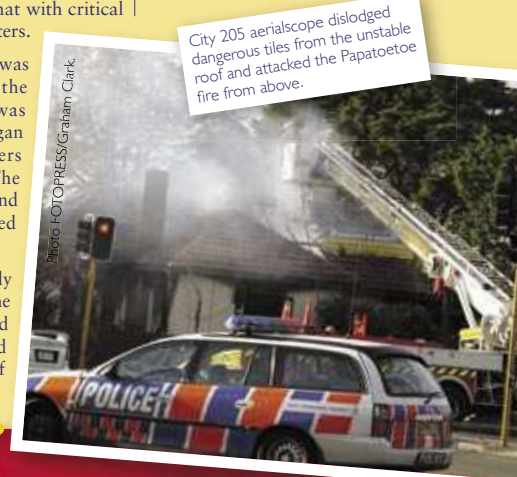
"This was tragic. And it's not something many people experience in their careers as firefighters. It was traumatic for the two guys." Andy says the crews involved accepted an invitation to have a chat with critical incident stress supporters.

City 205 aeriSCOPE was called in because the concrete tile roof was unstable, and tiles began falling on firefighters inside the house. The firefighters withdrew and the aeriSCOPE attacked the fire from above.

Andy says the tragedy was compounded by the fact that the household had experienced the same type of

fire only six weeks earlier. That time the woman managed to catch it in time. "It is tragic they didn't learn from that error. Now two children are no longer here."

The Fire Service had installed smoke alarms in the house in 1999, but it is unknown whether they were still there, or if not, what happened to them. Witnesses said they did not hear smoke alarms during the incident.



City 205 aeriSCOPE dislodged dangerous tiles from the unstable roof and attacked the Papatotoe fire from above.

Photo FOTOPRESS/Graham Clark



Ammonia leak

Tauranga, Mount Maunganui crews were called to an ammonia gas leak at a Bay of Plenty factory. Roy Lemon and Greg Meikle went into the factory and isolated the leak which was in the refrigeration unit. The factory, which exports green-lipped mussels, was evacuated.

Photo courtesy Bay of Plenty Times.