

NORTH BRANFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

909 FOXON ROAD • NORTH BRANFORD, CT 06471 • 203-484-6000

William Seward, III

Fire Chief

firechief@townofnorthbranfordct.com

Anthony Esposito

Deputy Fire Chief – Deputy Director of Emergency Management

financedirector@townofnorthbranfordct.com

Bert Bunnell

Fire Marshal

firemarshal@townofnorthbranfordct.com



Press Release

Contact: Chief William Seward, III

Phone: 203.627.0630

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"FREQUENCY OF FIRES IN NORTH BRANFORD"

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Over the past several weeks there have been a number of structure fires in North Branford that have raised questions from the public who are concerned about their cause and potential danger to the community.

Based upon the findings determined by the staff from the North Branford Fire Marshal's Office as well as independent insurance investigators, each of these fires have been classified as accidental. In general, when fires occur and are investigated, the cause and origin are categorized as accidental, incendiary or undetermined. A significant amount of time and effort is devoted

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into investigating every fire (which is required by CT General Statutes) before an incident is identified into one of three classifications. Many times forensic evidence is collected and sent to a lab for analysis; results could take weeks to months to be returned to the fire marshal's office.

In light of today's use of social media, there is always the question of whether or not an increase in the frequency and cause of fires in any community could be criminal in nature. To the citizens and visitors of North Branford, this is not the case here. Recent events have all resulted in a positive finding that the cause of these fires have been accidental. The Fire Marshal and Deputy Fire Marshal have conducted comprehensive investigations into each event and worked alongside insurance investigators to finalize their determinations. Very often local fire marshals obtain assistance from the CT State Police Fire Investigative and Explosives Unit in order to facilitate their scientific work. Some communities train a member of their police department as a fire investigator to assist the fire marshal in the investigative process. Their cooperative and collaborative work often provides for an effective means to successfully prosecute any individual(s) who may be suspected of committing a criminal act.

Finally, the residents of this community should feel safe as these recent incidents have not elevated the level of suspicion that these fires have been set intentionally.