

ATF

Reward Notice

San Francisco Field Division



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ATF, Local Investigators Offering \$10,000 Reward for Information about Lester Avenue Fire

OAKLAND, Calif. – A specialized fire investigation team from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) arrived in Oakland, California, Nov. 2, to assist with investigating a five-alarm structure fire that occurred at about 5 a.m. Monday, Oct. 31.

A team of around 25 special agents and other experts with the National Response Team (NRT) are working jointly with the Oakland Fire Department, Oakland Police Department and the Alameda County Fire Investigation Task Force to investigate the fire that destroyed an apartment complex development (located at 317 Lester Ave. in Oakland).

Certified fire investigators and other experts are sifting through debris, reconstructing the scene, collecting evidence, conducting interviews and attempting to identify an origin and cause of the fire. ATF is the sole federal agency with experience and resources to investigate fires and crimes of arson in the U.S. and its territories. The primary mission of the NRT is to concentrate ATF explosives and fire investigative resources and expertise on large-scale and complex incidents due to the size, scope or number of victims.

Anyone with any information about this crime should contact ATF at (800) ATF-FIRE(1-800-283-3473) or by visiting www.reportit.com (link is external) or through the mobile “reportit” app, available both on Google Play and the Apple App Store. All calls will be kept confidential.

The NRT concluded their scene work in Oakland on Nov. 9. The focused effort allowed investigators to quickly and systematically survey the scene and put the investigation into a manageable position for local investigators to continue. The Oakland Fire Department will continue with the investigation with the assistance of the local ATF office.

The NRT’s primary mission is to concentrate ATF explosives and fire investigative resources and expertise on large-scale incidents, or on more complex investigations. NRT maintains special agents that specialize in certified explosives specialist, certified fire investigators, forensic mappers and schematic artists, and canine handlers with an accelerant or explosives detection canine. All special agents are experienced explosives and fire investigators who have worked numerous fire/explosives scenes and have extensive training. NRT also consists of explosive enforcement offices, forensic chemists and multidiscipline engineers. More information on NRT can be found at <https://www.atf.gov/explosives/national-response-team>.

“They provide an immediate and sustained nationwide response, typically deploying within 24 hours of notification,” said Special Agent in Charge Jill Snyder. “We encourage anyone with any information regarding the fire to contact ATF. This investigation continues to be a joint effort between the Oakland Fire Department, Oakland Police Department and the Alameda County Fire Investigation Task Force.”

“The Oakland Fire Department is extremely grateful for the participation of the NRT in this investigation.” Oakland Fire Chief Teresa Deloach Reed said. “Multi-agency cooperation between local and federal partners gives the Fire Department access to additional resources, which enable us to gather information more quickly, and to conduct an investigation into the cause of a fire. Our Department remains committed to determining the cause of the Lester Avenue fire and urges members of the community to come forward with any information that they have.”

The City of Oakland is protected by the nearly 450 fire service professionals of the Oakland Fire Department. The OFD is comprised of eight divisions, including: Fiscal and Administration Services; Emergency Management Services Division; Medical Services Division; Fire Prevention & Support Services Bureau; and the Field Operations Bureau. The Operations Division responds out of 25 Fire Stations, located throughout the City and the International Airport, operating a fleet of 24 Engines, seven Trucks, and numerous other special operations, support, and reserve units throughout three Battalions. The OFD responds to approximately 60,000 emergency calls annually, with over 80 percent being emergency medical services calls.

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