

Highland Township Fires

In reading reports and investigations of the fires that occurred over the last three years in Highland Twp., only one was classified as an incendiary (Arson). Only two others seem to be to some degree suspicious in nature; first one where a fire started in an already burnt home that was boarded up (but being worked on) and secondly one barn fire that seemed to be set by human hands unknown if intentional or accidentally set by kids smoking.

There were 16 fires that were undetermined during this 3 year period. They are believed accidental; however, even though there was a hypothesis on how majority of them started, (such as careless smoking, chimney fire or electrical) they could not be classified accidental with an acceptable level of certainty.

If anyone has information on criminal activity being involved with fires in Highland Township, the Oakland County Sheriff's Office would be glad to continue to investigate, but at this time we do not believe we have a serial arsonist in Highland Township. The number of Highland Township fires seems to be in line with other jurisdictions of comparable size.

Four classifications of a fire:

1. (U) = Undetermined fire – when the cause cannot be proven to an acceptable level of certainty
2. (A) = Accidental fire (grill, smoking, oil rags in construction)
3. Incendiary = deliberately set with intent to cause a fire where one should not be (Arson).
4. Natural = (lightening etc.)

2017 - 6 fires

- 2 Commercial fires (Napa and Colsanti's) Napa (U) fire started near the furnace and electrical wiring which cannot be ruled out as the cause. Colsanti's (U) fire unable to rule out electrical reported old electrical and many extension cords, video shows fire started inside and no person seen coming or going.
- 4 Dwelling fires – Barn (U) too much damage to determine cause of fire owner indicated second level he tried to extinguish but it was too big, electrical near area of fire. (U) House fire electrical cannot be ruled out. Garage (A) s/e corner careless discarding of smoking materials cannot be eliminated. Barn (U) fire human caused, possible area kids smoking in barn.
- 0 Arson, 1 Accidental, 5 undetermined fires.

2016 - 12 Total fires

- 1 Arson – burning of a vehicle.
- 6 Accidental – Kitchen (A) Careless discarding of smoking material into kitchen garbage can. Chicken coop (A) at rear of the barn - heat lamp too close to combustibles. Chimney fire (A), Garage (A) fire electrical, Bedroom (A) careless smoking in bed with oxygen – previous fire for smoking, Bedroom (A) fire in bedroom that was being renovated, electrical and portable lighting.
- 5 undetermined fires - Garage fire (U) use of a welder and wood burning stove cannot be ruled out. (U) Fire was in the second floor s/w bedroom electrical or combustible too close to the heater cannot be ruled out. (U) Chimney fire could not be ruled out. (U) House burning again 5 days after a previous fire. (U) Fire started near the fire place of the home.
- 0 Commercial fires, 9 Dwelling fires, 3 Other fires (garage, chicken coop)

2015 - 7 Total fires

- 1 Commercial fire - Feed store (U) Fire began in the n/w corner of building.
- 6 Dwelling fires - Barn (U) possible heat lamp for pigs. House fire (U) started in bedroom, unknown cause possible careless smoking, space heater or electrical. Home (U) appears it may have been the dishwasher. Home fire (U) in the office portion careless smoking cannot be ruled out.
- (A) Home fire in attic from electrical to a heater.
- 0 Arson, 1 Accidental, and 6 undetermined fires.