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Fighting fire puts man in hospital

By Tracy Gilchrist and Michele Young Daily News Staff

Rayleigh neighbour leaps into action after explosion across the street

Fighting a neighbour's garage fire sent a Rayleigh man to hospital for possible carbon-monoxide poisoning Tuesday night, while police and fire officials are investigating what exploded and blew the windows of the house beside.

Jonas Harvey said he was working on his truck in a friend's driveway across the street from 321 Stevens Dr. at about 5:30 p.m. when he heard an explosion.

"The main windows on the lower level and upper level of the house were blown out and the garage door was also blown out and you could see a fire and smoke coming out of the garage," he said.

Harvey says he saw people running from the house and trying to get a garden hose going, so his friend went into his home to retrieve a couple fire extinguishers.

Through a hole in the side of the garage created by the blast, Harvey said he "went right in there and started putting out the fire."

"It was right from the floor and the roof. I got about 80 per cent of the fire out but the extinguisher ran out on me. My friend handed me another fire extinguisher."

His concern for a man in a wheelchair who lives in the house propelled him into action, putting aside his own safety. Harvey couldn't see well, but did make out some cans that looked like gas cans in the garage.

"I'm coughing up stuff right now but I knew it was more important to get the fire out."

Harvey was taken to Royal Inland Hospital over worries he suffered carbon monoxide poisoning.

The force of the explosion blew out windows in the house on the property as well as buckled the garage door.

Cpl. Cheryl Bush of Kamloops RCMP said two teens and a young adult were trying to extract oil from marijuana clippings using butane.

"The gas from the butane may have accumulated and then ignited, resulting in a forceful explosion within the residence."

Rob Chalmers, acting assistant chief with Kamloops Fire Rescue, said investigators will be at the house Wednesday to look for the cause. It appears some kind of flammable liquid in the garage is involved.

One man suffered some burns to his hands and possibly his face. He and another person were taken to hospital as a precaution, he said.

The house was extensively damaged by the blast and windows had to be boarded up to secure the residence overnight. Chalmers said the owners weren't home, but a son might have been.

The garage appeared to be full of items, including a motorcycle, he said.

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