



LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT



Report No.: 2008-12-0244			Dispatch Address/Location 40 UCLA X MOLECULAR SCIENCES BLDG WLA		
LAPD DR No.:			Incident Address/Location 40 UCLA X MOLECULAR SCIENCES BLDG WLA,,		
Case Status: CLOSED			Doing Business As UCLA MOLECULAR SCIENCES		
Incident Date 12/29/2008	Alarm Time 14:57	Incident # 0699	First on Scene RA037	Member Completing NFIRS Report G. JENKINS #29945	Assignment BC009
Incident Type Fire(other)			Area of Origin Laboratory		
Cause of Ignition Unintentional			Form of Heat Chemical reaction		
Item First Ignited (general) Flammable liquid/gas - uncontained			Material Type First Ignited (specific) Flammable gas(other)		
Property Use/Premises Laboratory or science laboratory			Motive N/A	Stories N/A	Floor of Origin N/A
Make N/A	Model	Year N/A	Color N/A	License N/A	State N/A
VIN No. N/A		No. Injuries 1		No. Fatal 0	Arson Notified No
Property Loss \$0.00	Content Loss \$0.00		Acres Burn	Arson Notified No	
Abbrev. Narrative/Synopsis (Fire Cause, Origin & Travel, M.O., etc.)					
<p>A FULL TIME FEMALE LAB TECH EMPLOYEE AT UCLA MOLECULAR SCIENCE BUILDING WAS WORKING WITH HIGHLY FLAMMABLE CHEMICALS THAT FLASHED SPONTANEOUSLY WHEN MIXED WITH AIR AND CAUSED SEVERE BURNS TO HER BODY. THE PATIENT WAS TRANSPORTED TO UCLA AND SUBSEQUENTLY TO GROSSMAN BURN CENTER IN CRITICAL BUT STABLE CONDITION. FIRE INVOLVED THE FEMALE PATIENT ONLY. CAUSE: UNINTENTIONAL.</p>					
Reported By: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Police <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> 911 Call (Name/Phone) UCLA DISPATCH					
Investigator W. ZLENDICK #48715			Investigator R. HERNANDEZ #48238		Date Assigned 12/30/2008
Photos: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Taken By:		Evidence: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Arson K9 Deployed <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		Location Booked:			
Supervisor/Approving 28134		E ID 28134		Date 010809	
Entry Date:		Clerk:			



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Fire Injury						
Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Sex	Desc	Age	DOB
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		F	O	23	[REDACTED]
D.L ID No.	State	Residence Address				Phone
		[REDACTED]				
Occupation/Business Name		Business Address				Phone
		N/A				
Comment: BURN PATIENT.						
Others						
Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Sex	Desc	Age	DOB
HARRAN	PATRICK		M		39	[REDACTED]
D.L ID No.	State	Residence Address				Phone
		N/A				
Occupation/Business Name		Business Address				Phone
UCLA MOLECULAR SCIENCES BLDG 5505A		00607 CHARLES E. YOUNG DR LOS ANGELES, CA 90095				(310)825- 6578
Comment: PROFESSOR INCHARGE OF UCLA MOLECULAR SCIENCE BLDG.						



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CASE SYNOPSIS

A full time female lab tech employee at UCLA Molecular Science Building was working with highly flammable chemicals that flashed spontaneously when mixed with air and caused severe burns to her body. The patient was transported to UCLA and subsequently transferred to Grossman Burn Center in critical but stable condition. The fire did not involve the structure or contents. Cause-UNINTENTIONAL.

SOURCE OF ACTIVITY

On Monday, December 29, 2008, Investigator Hernandez #48238, and I, Investigator Zlendick #48715, were working the Los Angeles Fire Department Arson/Counter Terrorism Section assigned to A-Unit 2. At approximately 1518 hours we were dispatched to investigate a burn victim located at 40 UCLA. The incident was reported to the fire department at approximately 1457 hours, Inc #699. Battalion Chief Everett #51173 of Battalion 9, requested our response.

INVESTIGATION

While en route to the subject location we contacted Battalion 9, Chief Everett who informed us a female lab tech had been working with chemicals that flashed and caused severe burns to her body. He informed us the patient was conscious and being transported by LAFD Rescue 71 to UCLA Medical Center.

We responded to UCLA Medical Center to follow up on the patient's condition and to get a statement. The transporting paramedics informed me that while en route to the hospital, the victim was alert and oriented, and able to identify herself as [REDACTED] DOB: [REDACTED]. As per Los Angeles Fire Department Emergency Medical Services Report #CB051435, the Paramedics documented that [REDACTED] had sustained second and third degree burns to her chest, both arms, both hands and thighs.

I spoke with UCLA Medical Center Emergency treating physician Dr. Cooper, MD. She informed me that [REDACTED] was in critical but stable condition and had suffered approximately 40%, total body surface area burns, which involved her front upper torso, both arms, hands and thighs. The burns consisted of second and third degree full thickness burns with no respiratory involvement signs at this time. She further stated they were going to sedate her and we would be able to communicate with her.

After the patient was stabilized I was able to conduct an interview with the patient. The patient made the following statements:

- She is a full time lab tech at UCLA, and was working with a chemical called Pertbutyllithium. She was extracting the chemical out of a 4-oz. bottle with a 60 mil Syringe.



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INVESTIGATION (Cont.)

- She pulled the plunger out too far, the plunger came out of the housing of the syringe, and the chemical spilled out and flashed. She stated the chemical would spontaneously ignite if it combines with air.
- She further stated there was also a chemical called Hexane solution that is very flammable that spilled on her clothes that also ignited and caused her clothes to catch fire. She further stated there were three other individuals in the room who came to her aide.

We then proceeded to the incident location, met with Battalion 9, Chief Everett, and informed him of our updated information. We confirmed the information with the lab tech supervisor Professor Patrick Harran. Due to the possible hazardous environment in the subject room, 4221 of the Molecular Science Building, we did not enter and Chief Everett informed us there was no fire damage to the structure or contents.

FOLLOW-UP

On December 30, 2008, I followed up on the patient's condition. The patient had been subsequently transferred to Sherman Oaks Burn Center. I contacted the burn center by telephone, and was advised by the charge nurse that the patient was in critical but stable condition. No further information was available at this time. I requested to be advised of any medical changes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the statements made I am of the opinion that [REDACTED] accidentally exposed air reactive chemicals to the ambient air resulting in burning of her clothing and body.
Cause-UNINTENTIONAL.

CASE STATUS

This case will be listed as COMPLETE.