



TOWN OF TRURO

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Propane Leak Most Likely Led to Home Explosion

Exact cause remains officially undetermined

June 17, 2023 (Truro, MA) – Truro Fire Chief Timothy Collins, Truro Police Chief Jamie M. Calise, and State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey announced today that the fire and explosions which resulted in the destruction of a home at 8A Harding’s Way on April 20, 2023, were most likely caused by a propane leak. The leak, believed to have been ignited by home heating equipment, is considered the primary contributing factor.

Due to the extensive damage caused by the blast, multiple potential causes could not be conclusively ruled out. However, after a thorough investigation conducted by the Truro Fire Department, Truro Police Department, and State Police Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit, it was determined that the origin of the incident was in the basement, near the left rear corner of the residence. In this area, a water heater and furnace, both significantly damaged, were located. The most probable sequence of events suggests that propane leaked into the basement, subsequently being ignited by either the water heater or furnace. This led to a fire and explosion, ultimately causing a 120-gallon propane tank to detonate.

While the official cause will remain undetermined, investigators found no evidence indicating foul play or an intentionally set fire.

The investigation received invaluable support from the Code Compliance & Enforcement Unit of the Department of Fire Services. Inspectors discovered that the propane tank, manufactured in 1989, was overdue for a requalification examination. Furthermore, the tank had been improperly filled with 5.5 gallons of propane, a violation of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code. The Fire Code explicitly mandates that propane tanks must undergo the requalification process and comply with other relevant provisions before being refilled. In response to this violation, inspectors issued a notice of violation to the individual responsible for filling the tank on behalf of F.A. Days & Sons.

The Truro Fire Department promptly responded to the incident at approximately 11:15 p.m. on April 20, 2023, following the initial explosion. The ensuing fire escalated to three alarms, prompting the mobilization of firefighters and apparatus from various locations across Cape Cod. Although the primary structure was destroyed, firefighters successfully prevented the fire from spreading, thereby limiting the damage to neighboring homes. Thankfully, no injuries were reported.

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