



City of Littleton
LITTLETON FIRE RESCUE

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- What's Hot?
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- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
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- Communications Center
- Educational Programs
- Permits & Plan Reviews
- Entry Level Employment
- Media Information
- Kids' Page
- Fire-related Links



City of Littleton
LITTLETON FIRE RESCUE
ADMINISTRATION
2255 W. Berry Ave.
Littleton, CO 80165
303-795-3800
M-F, 8 am -5 pm
TDD: 303-794-1555
Fire non-emergency
303-794-1555
24 hours/day

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jay Ruoff, Division Chief, 303-851-7410

Date: 01/04/04

Trailmark Fire, 9815 West Freiburg Drive

On December 25, 2003 at 11:30:48 Littleton Fire Rescue received the first of over sixteen 911 reports of a structure fire at 9815 W. Freiburg Drive located in the TrailMark subdivision in the City of Littleton.

On December 26, 2003 an [initial press release](#) was completed that outlined the basic information for the response. This press release, and the investigative documents overview the final Fire Cause and Origin report, as well as addressing the numerous components of the fire investigation:

- On December 26, 2003 it was noted that the first fire unit arrived on scene at 11:43:18. During the investigation it was concluded that the first fire truck to arrive on the scene arrived immediately prior to a Littleton Police officer who notified his dispatcher that he was on scene at 11:41 hours via the radio. The first fire truck was operating on a mutual aid radio channel that could not be heard by the Littleton Fire Communications Technician, but was heard by other incoming units. This revised arrival time indicates the first fire apparatus arrived on the scene within 11 minutes of the first 911 call which was received at 11:30:12 as indicated on the Qwest 911 log.
- Based on witness interviews, fire scene examination and a video tape taken just prior to and after the arrival of the first fire apparatus, it was concluded by Littleton Fire Investigators that the fire originated on the balcony of Unit A. The video taken by a resident of an adjoining building was analyzed in slow motion and real time and shows visual evidence of fire inside the wall between the balcony and Unit A, as well as in the patio roof and eaves along the north / east corner of the building. The evidence concluded that the fire was inside the wall and attic of the building before it was discovered by the first caller.
- The fire cause investigation concluded that the fire originated on the balcony in the area of an extension cord that was plugged into an energized wall outlet, but had nothing plugged into the end of the cord. There was evidence of damage to the cord prior to the fire that most likely attributed to the ignition of the fire. The cord was wrapped around a plastic bottle for storage and all burn patterns and evidence concluded the fire originated in the area of the extension cord. All other accidental and incendiary fire causes were ruled out during the investigation.
- There was initial witness speculation that a barbeque located on the balcony was the cause of the fire. The investigation concluded that the electric barbeque was not plugged in, or energized, and that an x-ray of the main control unit indicated that the barbeque control was in the OFF position.
- Fire had spread extensively throughout the wall between the balcony and Unit A, and made its way to the attic space before firefighters arrived. Residents reported that there was smoke visible from the roof eaves on both ends of the building prior to the arrival of the first fire engine and this was concluded by examination of the video tape taken prior to the arrival of firefighters.
- An interior fire attack was made to extinguish fire in the living room, study and balcony areas of Unit A, but as related in the firefighters narrative reports as they

pulled down ceilings in Unit A and Unit E on the second floor of the building, they discovered heavy fire conditions. Firefighters noted that as they extinguished the visible fire in the attic the fire would "briefly die down and then come roaring back." This, along with the visible smoke coming from the roof eaves of the building concluded that there was heavy fire in the large attic area of the building that consisted of combustible construction.

- Firefighters were eventually forced from the second floor of the building because the heavy conditions in the attic caused a collapse of the roof areas in Unit A.
- The final investigation report evaluated the water pressures that were encountered on the day of the fire. It was confirmed by Denver Water Department that water line control valves were either closed or partially closed. These conditions provided firefighters with approximately 750 gallons of water per minute at the hydrant in front of the building. After the control valves were restored by Denver Water, the hydrants were tested and the flow at the hydrant in front of the building provided 1,278 gallons per minute.
- A detailed review of witness statements, interviews, scene photographs, incident reports, time logs, Qwest 911 logs, and Littleton Fire and Police telephone and radio communication audio tapes, as well as the video tape of the fire prior to and after the arrival of firefighters concluded that there were no factors that attributed to a delayed response or fire apparatus that were unable to find the location of the fire.

Detailed Fire Investigation reports are available from Littleton Fire Rescue. Please direct all inquiries to Division Chief Jay Ruoff at 303-851-7410.



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