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News for Darien

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Police: Shed Engulfed in Flames After Ashes From a Fire Pit Placed Inside

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Date : May 7, 2018

After ashes from a fire pit were put in a shed on the property of a house on Alpine Lane, the shed caught on fire late Saturday night.

No one was injured, and Noroton Heights Fire Department firefighters put out the flames.

Darien police gave this account of what happened:

The shed fire was reported to police and the fire department at 11:40 p.m. on Saturday, May 5.

When police arrived at 10 Alpine Lane (a block east of the Middlesex Club and a few blocks north of Holmes School), the 10-foot-by-10-foot shed was already engulfed in flames.

A neighbor told police an explosion was heard before the flames were seen.

Although the town Fire Marshal's Office officially determines the cause of fires in town, police pointed out that ashes from a fire in a fire pit had been placed in the shed. (See sidebar below for safety tips about fire ashes.)

Lawn equipment and toys in the shed were damaged, and the heat also damaged a fence and some plantings.

Noroton Heights Fire Department later posted this video on Twitter, showing engines leaving the station:

[#NorotonHeightsFD](#) departing the [#firehouse](#) Sat night, on a call for smoke in a structure [#engine23](#) [#tanker22](#) pic.twitter.com/lmE55K95DK

— Noroton Heights Fire Dept (@NHFD1903) [May 6, 2018](#)

SIDEBAR:

Safety Tips on Ash Disposal

The following article [was published](#) by [NewCanaanite.com](#) in 2014:

Embers can remain active in ashes for up to five days after a fire dies down, and even then should only be removed into a metal container with tight lid for safe disposal, New Canaan fire safety officials say.

Connecticut already saw one fire caused by improper disposal of fireplaces ashes, and this “happened when ashes from a woodstove were placed outside, adjacent to the foundation of the home which ignited the homes siding,” New Canaan Fire Marshal Fred Baker said.

“The good news is, the family was alerted by a smoke detector and they made a safe escape,” Baker said. “However, their home suffered moderate fire damage and may be uninhabitable for some time.”

Here are Baker’s safe ash disposal tips:

- Let'em wait! What's the rush? It's a fireplace. Fires actually burn better with a bed of ashes.
- Be mindful that several of the past experiences with improper ash disposal have involved housekeepers or care takers being “helpful” and cleaning out the fireplace and then placing the ashes

in the trash.

- If you insist, use an approved metal container with a tight lid. These are available at Weed and Duryea and other home goods locations.
- Also little known is the fact that if the improperly-disposed-of ashes don't set your house on fire, they can ignite in the garbage truck, which is a real quagmire as the truck must quickly dump the load, wherever they are, in the street. That is the true definition of a mess.
- And if they don't erupt in the garbage truck, they can create quite a problem when they ignite at the Recycling Center/Transfer Station.

“As you may recall the horrific Christmas morning fire in Stamford [several] years ago was caused by improper disposal of fireplace ashes,” Baker said. “Please be safe for your family’s sake.”