



**Fire Department**  
**City of Modesto**  
*"We Care"*

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*Office of the Fire Chief*  
***Press Release***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date:** January 2, 2010  
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**TWO MODESTO FIRE FIGHTERS INJURED IN HOUSE FIRE**

**Modesto, CA** - Last night two Modesto Fire Fighters were significantly injured and burned when the roof they were working on collapsed without warning. The two were part of a three person company assigned to vertically ventilate the roof during a structure fire.

The fire was dispatched at 11:36 p.m. and was located at 2308 Coston Avenue in Modesto. The first engine arrived on scene at 11:43 p.m. to find heavy smoke visible from an attached garage at a single story house. Truck 5 was given the assignment to cut a hole in the roof (vertical ventilation) of the structure. Vertical Ventilation is used to remove the heat and smoke from the environment below and to facilitate the extinguishment process below. At the time of the collapse Fire department units had been on scene for just six minutes.

The collapsed prompted a "MAYDAY" transmission indicating that fire fighters were in trouble. As a result of the "MAYDAY" transmission, the Rapid Intervention Company (RIC) activated and affected the rescue of the two downed fire fighters. The "MAYDAY" declaration also caused the escalation of the incident from a single alarm working structure fire to three alarms. A

single alarm delivers four engines, one truck, and one Chief Officer to the scene for a total of 16 fire personnel. A second alarm response dispatched an additional engine and truck to the scene with six more personnel. The third alarm dispatched two additional engines and another six fire fighters. Added to the apparatus five Chief Officers also responded along with a four fire investigators.

Both fire fighters were rescued from the building within three minutes of the collapse. They were treated on scene by Modesto Fire Department and American Medical Response paramedics prior to being transported to area hospitals. One fire fighter was later transferred to the UC Davis Burn Center in Sacramento.

Remaining fire personnel brought the fire under control shortly after the collapse. It appears that the fire was accidental, started by the occupant of the residence refueling a generator, using a candle for light. The candle was dropped, causing the ignition of the fire.

Preliminary reports also indicate that there could have been structural defects to the roof that may have contributed to the rapid collapse of the building. The fire remains under investigation. No other injuries to firefighters were reported. Estimated Fire loss is \$25,000.00.

I will brief the media again at 11:00 a.m. in front of the Coston Avenue address.

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