



CITY OF HARRISONBURG
FIRE
DEPARTMENT

101 NORTH MAIN STREET
HARRISONBURG, VA 22802
OFFICE (540) 432-7703

For Immediate Release: Dec. 9, 2021

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HFD Sets Damage Estimate; Determines Cause of 3-Alarm Fire

HARRISONBURG, Va. – The Harrisonburg Fire Department Fire Marshal's Office has ruled the Nov. 30 3-alarm fire at Packaging Corporation of America as accidental.

Investigators determined that the fire originated in a piece of machinery designed to heat and apply wax to cardboard boxes. Preliminary damage estimates have been set at \$1 million. The building and its contents are valued at approximately \$55 million.

Harrisonburg firefighters were called to the 900 block of Pleasant Valley Road at approximately 9 p.m. on Nov. 30 for a reported structure fire at the commercial facility. The first-arriving engine officer found heavy fire showing from the roof area of the manufacturing plant and immediately requested a second alarm assignment. Shortly thereafter, a third alarm was requested based on the volume of visible fire and the complexity of operating in a large facility.

The aggressive, coordinated, and ultimately successful efforts of the responding firefighters kept the fire contained to a limited area, allowing the plant, and its more than 180 employees, to continue operating. At its height, more than 60 firefighters from Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Augusta County and Shenandoah County were involved in controlling the fire. HFD was also assisted by the Harrisonburg Rescue Squad, Harrisonburg Police Department, and the Salvation Army Canteen Unit.

"We are deeply appreciative to all of our public safety partners who responded to the scene as well as provided coverage in the City," Fire Chief Matthew Tobia said. "This could have been a devastating event were it not for the combined efforts of the responders coupled with the fixed fire protection systems inside the building that helped contain the fire."

The Harrisonburg Fire Department reminds all residents that winter is heating season, when an increased number of fires occur. Functioning smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms save lives. Any Harrisonburg resident can receive a free smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm installed in their home through HFD.



(Above) Firefighters respond Nov. 30 to the Packaging Corporation of America building on Pleasant Valley Road.

Residents can call to schedule an installation at 540-432-7703 during regular business hours.

The Harrisonburg Fire Department is an ISO-Class II All-Hazards agency providing essential emergency and non-emergency life safety services to the public who live, work and travel in Harrisonburg. More information about the Fire Department is available on-line at www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire or on Facebook[®], Twitter[®] and Instagram[®].

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to almost 55,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.



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