



# NEWS



## News Headlines 4/7/2017

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## Explosion at Fontana pallet yard leaves man with extensive burns

Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: April 6, 2017, 9:54 AM



Firefighters work the scene of a pallet yard fire in the 8400 block of Sultana Avenue in Fontana on Thursday. Jennifer Cappuccio Maher — Staff Photographer

FONTANA >> A man suffered extensive burns after an explosion Thursday morning damaged a Fontana pallet yard and created a plume of smoke that could be seen for miles.

It was one of two fires in the area Thursday. The second ignited in Pomona at a plastics manufacturer where many pallets also caught fire. The call for help there went out about 5:41 p.m..

In the Fontana incident, the injured man “heard some sort of leak, possibly from a propane tank, and went to investigate,” said Battalion Chief Donnie Vilorio, of the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**, at the blaze. “There was an ignition, a fire and explosion. He was right in the middle of it and suffered the injuries he did.”

The unidentified man, a pallet yard employee, was taken to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center in Colton with second- and third-degree burns over 65 percent of his body, he said.

In the Pomona fire, the plastics involved in the blaze were responsible for the thick black smoke visible for miles, Capt. John Tripp of the Los Angeles County Fire Department said.

“Whenever we have plastics, it’s more intense than wood,” he said.

In 2013, a five-alarm blaze ripped through and destroyed the same Fontana pallet yard, sending flames and large black plumes of smoke in the air.

According to Vilorio, there have been two other fires there within the last few years.

“If you can believe it, those are still under investigation,” he said. “But this is the first one we’ve had in the city in about a year and a half.”

Last year, pallet yard owners in the Inland Empire suffered a high number of fires at their businesses, some of which were determined to have been arson.

The second-alarm blaze Thursday, reported just after 9 a.m., erupted at the Ramirez Pallet Yard in the 8400 block of Sultana Avenue, according to a county fire Twitter post.

Crews were training nearby when they heard an explosion and came outside and saw the fire. They did not have a fire engine or apparatus with them, but they did provide assistance initially until the first engine crew arrived.

Crews from Rialto and Rancho Cucamonga fire departments also helped knock down the pallet fire which officials say are notoriously difficult to get under control. Because of the way pallets are created and stacked, and because air, which feeds the flames, can get in between the pallets, the fires burn hotter and tend to be more difficult to put out, fire officials said.

A trailer with pallets inside, a building and several nearby pallet stacks were destroyed by the fire.

Although initial reports indicate the fire may not have been intentionally set, investigators were called to the scene to determine the cause.

In Nov. 2016, a fire ripped through a pallet yard on Riverview Drive near Mountain Avenue in San Bernardino, marking the fifth fire at a pallet yard that year.

In response to the high number of fires that year, Fontana yard operators got together and created the North American Pallet Association. Lina Montes, owner of G.O. Pallets in Fontana is a vocal member and the secretary for the group.

At the time, the fires were centered in Fontana, leading some members to believe there was a land ownership issue, Montes said in a recent interview. However, with fires popping up in Riverside and Los Angeles County, she said she was stumped as to a motive.

She said it's unlikely that pallet yard operators are starting the fires themselves to make insurance money.

"It's not for insurance because we lose more than insurance gives us. We make more selling to a company," Montes said.

When her pallet yard ignited Jan. 17, she said she got a \$22,000 bill from the fire department. Her insurance covered \$5,000 of it.

Montes said she's convinced pallet owners are being targeted and points to surveillance video captured at a Fontana pallet fire in October of last year which appears to show someone throwing a Molotov cocktail into the yard as proof.

The recent rash of fires at the local businesses are a top priority for investigators, according to Brian Headley, fire prevention supervisor/arson investigator at the San Bernardino County Fire Department, and he's received help from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Los Angeles County Fire Department with the investigations.

"I have a big map that was created by the ATF mapping all the fires here, in L.A. and Riverside," he said Thursday morning.

The suspicious fires attracted the attention of Congresswoman Norma Torres, D-Pomona, who sent a written request to local law enforcement late last year asking them to prioritize their investigation of the fires and to focus on the possibility of arson, she said in a written statement.

“These are very involved investigations, and we are working hard to get them solved,” Headley said.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170406/explosion-at-fontana-pallet-yard-leaves-man-with-extensive-burns>

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## Man suffers burns when fire erupts at pallet yard in Fontana on April 6

Alejandro Cano, Fontana Herald News

Posted: April 6, 2017, 11:02 AM



Firefighters extinguish a pallet fire in western Fontana on April 6. (Herald News photo by Alejandro Cano)

A man suffered second and third degree burns when a fire erupted at a pallet yard in western Fontana on the morning of Thursday, April 6.

The man, who was an employee of Ramirez Pallets, was burned on 65 percent of his body and was transported to a local hospital, according to Battalion Chief Donny Vilorio of the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**.

The fire in the 8400 block of Sultana Avenue was first reported at 9:10 a.m.

First arriving units discovered a trailer well involved with fire that had already spread to nearby stacks of pallets and an adjacent structure. An aggressive defensive attack strategy was utilized to limit the spread.

"Fortunately, the lack of wind and spacing between the pallets allowed firefighters to quickly gain the upper hand and bring the fire under control in just over half an hour," said Eric Sherwin, a public information officer with the Fire Department who provided an update later in the day.

Four truck companies, seven engines, two medic squads, one inmate hand crew, three chief officers, and two investigators totaling 58 personnel were assigned to the incident. Assistance was provided by Rancho Cucamonga Fire Protection District and Rialto Fire Department.

Damage estimates were not immediately available.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation, but it appeared to be accidental, Viloría said.

Several suspicious pallet yard fires have taken place in Fontana and other nearby cities in recent years, and at least some of those fires were believed to be caused by arsonists.

[http://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/man-suffers-burns-when-fire-erupts-at-pallet-yard-in/article\\_3bed5e5e-1af3-11e7-bae2-9339b3c796ec.html](http://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/man-suffers-burns-when-fire-erupts-at-pallet-yard-in/article_3bed5e5e-1af3-11e7-bae2-9339b3c796ec.html)

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## Fire erupts at Fontana pallet yard; 1 severely injured

Leticia Juarez, ABC7 News

Posted: April 6, 2017, 1:05 PM



A forklift operator suffered severe burns after a fire erupted at a pallet yard in Fontana on Thursday. (KABC)

FONTANA, Calif. (KABC) –

A pallet yard in Fontana caught fire on Thursday, shooting flames and plumes of thick smoke up in the air.

The second-alarm blaze was first reported around 9:17 a.m. in the 8400 block of Sultana Avenue, according to the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**.

Officials said a forklift operator suffered second- and third-degree burns and was transported to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center for treatment.

According to the fire department, one structure, one trailer and multiple pallets were engulfed in flames.

Efforts to douse the flames were made more difficult and dangerous after several explosions ignited stacks of wooden pallets on the property.

Firefighters believe the blaze ignited in an area called the "kiln," where wooden pallets are dried at the yard, known as the Ramirez Pallets.

An employee told Eyewitness News that the blaze started after a heat treater used to dry pallets possibly ignited a leaking propane tank.

"The fire got really hot, started whistling, then there's a massive explosion, and maybe three, four seconds after that, it exploded again, and everybody just started running at that point," witness Don McCauley said.

The bulk of the fire was knocked down shortly before 10 a.m.

The exact cause of the blaze was not immediately known.

Three trucks, seven engines, two squads and three chief officers were assigned to knock down the blaze, with assistance from the Rancho Cucamonga and Rialto fire departments, the San Bernardino County Fire Department said.

Area roads near the pallet yard were closed during the firefight and cleanup process.

<http://abc7.com/news/fire-erupts-at-fontana-pallet-yard;-1-severely-injured/1842597/>

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## Fire strikes Fontana pallet yard

Inland News Today

Posted: April 6, 2017



FONTANA – (INT) – One person was injured when a roaring fire struck a pallet yard Thursday.

A trailer was destroyed in the roaring inferno that sent a column of smoke above the Fontana-Rancho Cucamonga area.

County firefighters were assisted by units from Rancho Cucamonga and Rialto as propane tanks were ‘off-gassing’.

The 2-alarm blaze at Ramirez Pallets in the 8400 block of Sultana Avenue was nearly contained an hour after it was reported at 9:11am, but stacks of wooden pallets continued to burn. It may have started near an oven used to dry the wooden pallets.

An injured employee suffered 2nd and 3rd degree burns and was taken to a local hospital.

Thursday’s blaze was the latest in a series of pallet yard fires around the Inland Empire.

Last November, a 3-alarm blaze in Perris covered 2-acres. Losses were estimated at \$300,000. The intense predawn blaze sent a plume of smoke over the Perris Valley. There were no reported injuries.

The flaming stacks of wooden pallets followed another blaze the same week in Jurupa Valley in which a building was severely damaged.

Similar fires have occurred last year at pallet storage yards in San Bernardino and Fontana.

A reward was offered in one of the blazes in which a suspect was seen on surveillance video tossing a lighted object over a fence and into the pallets.

<http://www.inlandnewstoday.com/story.php?s=45754>



## One Injured in Fontana Pallet Yard Fire

24/7 Headline News

Posted: April 6, 2017



FONTANA – A Fontana Pallet Yard Fire broke out on Thursday morning leading the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** to initiate a 2nd-alarm response. At around 9:10 a.m. dispatchers received the call reporting the Commercial Structure fire at the Ramirez Pallets located at 8431 Sultana Avenue in the City of Fontana. Fire officials initiated the 2nd alarm response due to the high likelihood of the wood fueling the fire, potentially causing a higher rate of spread. The Fontana Water District was also called and requested to raise the pressure in the system to support the large volume of water required to fight the fire officials said.

When firefighters arrived they located a well-involved trailer. The fire had begun to spread to nearby stacks of pallets and to an adjacent structure. Firefighters moved in with a defensive attack to limit the spread. “Fortunately, the lack of wind and spacing between the pallets allowed firefighters to quickly gain the upper hand and bring the fire under control in just over half an hour,” said San Bernardino County Fire Public Information Officer Eric Sherwin.

San Bernardino County Fire Department sent four truck companies, seven engines, two medic squads, one inmate handcrew, three chief officers, and two fire investigators, totaling 58 personnel. Rancho Cucamonga Fire Protection District and Rialto Fire Department also responded to provide assistance.

One civilian sustained burns as a result of the fire and was transported to the Arrowhead Regional Medical Center Burn Center. There is no information available regarding the damage estimates and the fire remains under investigation at this time.

<https://247headline.com/one-injured-in-fontana-pallet-yard-fire/>

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## Bicyclist struck by FedEx van on National Trails Highway

Daily Press

Posted: April 6, 2017, 1:29 PM



A bicyclist is loaded into an ambulance at the scene of a crash on National Trails Highway, near Mill Street, on Thursday afternoon. Authorities said the man was transported a landing zone at Southern California Logistics Airport, where was airlifted to a trauma center. [Paola Baker, Daily Press]

**ORO GRANDE** — A bicyclist was airlifted to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center after he was struck by a FedEx vehicle on National Trails Highway, near Mill Street, on Thursday afternoon.

Authorities responded to the collision, reported at 12:36 p.m., and found the man with injuries and requested a helicopter for transport, according to **San Bernardino County Fire Department** spokesman Eric Sherwin.

The bicyclist was loaded into an ambulance just before 1 p.m. to be transported to a landing zone at Southern California Logistics Airport, Sherwin said.

California Highway Patrol officer Michael Fernandez said the bicyclist was traveling on the southbound National Trails Highway shoulder. Fernandez said the bicyclist slightly swerved into traffic and struck the front of the FedEx van. The drive stayed at the scene and was not injured.

The collision is being investigated by the CHP.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170406/bicyclist-struck-by-fedex-van-on-national-trails-highway>

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## Coroner's IDs Father and Son Killed in Highway 58 Crash

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: April 6, 2017



(Hugo C. Valdez, Victor Valley News)

KRAMER JUNCTION, Calif. (VVNG.com) The San Bernardino County Coroner's office identified the father and son killed in a crash on Highway 58.

Jacob Carrillo Jr., 22, and his 4-year-old son Landon Carrillo, from Bakersfield, were killed on impact when their vehicle collided head-on with a tractor-trailer.

The deadly crash involving a black Kia Optima and a tractor-trailer occurred on Tuesday, April 4, 2017, at 11:34 a.m. on U.S. Highway 58 approximately 1/4 mile west of Highway 395, near Kramer Junction.

According to the coroner's press release, the black Kia was traveling westbound on U.S.

Highway 58 when for unknown reasons, the vehicle crossed the double yellow line and struck the eastbound 18 wheeler head-on.

Jacob's mother was driving the vehicle and also sustained life-threatening injuries. She was airlifted to a trauma center and her condition remains unknown.

Ex-paramedic, Jim Mitchell, commented on Victor Valley News YouTube video and said he was the first one on the scene.

"The car came out of her lane and hit the truck head-on, talked to the driver of the truck he said looked like she must have lost a front rim," stated Mitchell.

"It took 40 minutes for the fire department to get there. You figure they would have a better response time," said Mitchell.

The collision remains under investigation by the Barstow CHP office.

<http://www.vvng.com/coroners-ids-father-son-killed-highway-58-crash/>