



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Quick Actions by Owner and His Neighbors Save Home

On November 17, 2013 at 4:47 p.m. a first-alarm structure fire assignment was dispatched by the SB County Communications Center for a house fire in the area of Country Club Dr. and Spring Valley Lake Pkwy in the community of Spring Valley Lake. Multiple reports of a home on fire with smoke and flames coming from a chimney were being made.

Upon arriving on scene three minutes after dispatch, the first-in engine was directed by bystanders to a home in the 13200 block of Country Club Dr. and found smoke coming from the exterior wall of the chimney of an approximately 2500 sq foot home. It was also noted the homeowner and neighbors were using garden hoses to keep the fire in check. A coordinated effort between the engine and truck company on the roof, kept the fire to just the exterior wall of the outside chimney.

During the investigation the owner had stated they had started a fire in their fire place earlier and while enjoying the evening heard a loud sound coming from inside the fireplace. Upon investigating they found the exterior fire just as bystanders were alerting them of the fire. It was also noted in the investigation that the residence had what is called a "zero clearance" fireplace. These types of fireplaces are not made out of brick and mortar but are built using an aluminum stack pipe as the fireplace flue and are built in a box with wood to give the appearance of a chimney. This box then has stucco placed on the outside to finish the look. More predominately found in your tract type homes, they can be found in any type of residential structure. They are meant more for gas-log type fires or the occasional "duralog" type fire. If a large wood fire is built within the zero clearance fire place it increases the chance of the radiant heat igniting the interior wood structure which then could lead to your entire attic becoming ablaze.

Safety Message: The San Bernardino County Fire Department reminds the public that as the temperatures start to drop and you feel the need to start a fire in your fireplace you first should have it cleaned and inspected. A certified chimney sweep can clean the inside of your fireplace taking away highly flammable creosote which has a tendency to start chimney fires. They may also be able to check for cracks in your chimney which may lead to radiant heat escaping and allowing a fire to start in your attic.

