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Cause determined for \$1 million-plus Loveland fire

Loveland Fire Rescue Authority investigators have found that a July 9 fire that destroyed the Ward Building at 2114 N. Lincoln Ave. originated when a ventilation maintenance worker using grinding equipment accidentally ignited insulation material in the two-story building's attic.

More than 25 pieces of fire equipment and firefighters from Loveland and six other jurisdictions were able to control and extinguish the three-alarm fire, and LFRA firefighters remained on the scene through the night and the following day.

Origin and Cause Summary:

The owner of the 10,779-square-foot building told investigators that a maintenance worker had been working on the HVAC system at the southeast corner of the building. Metal grinding operations ignited a fire in the cellulose insulation and fiberboard within the attic at approximately 7:30 p.m.

The maintenance worker used two dry chemical fire extinguishers and a garden hose in an attempt to extinguish the fire, removed burned debris from the attic and examined the fire area. He said he felt the fire was out and left the scene after consulting with a building owner on the scene at approximately 8 p.m.

Assessment of burn patterns and witness interviews confirmed that the area of fire origin was within the attic at the southeast corner of the building. All other potential fire causes were ruled out, and the cause of the fire was determined to be accidental.

"This was a very unfortunate incident for the building owners, the building tenants, and of course for the maintenance worker who had been working at the property," LFRA Deputy Fire Marshal Scott Pringle said. "The good news is that there were no fatalities or any serious injuries as a result of this fire. The property damage to the building and contents was severe, and unfortunately all of the tenants of this office building have been displaced."

"I've heard that the building owners have been extremely helpful in their efforts to try to find alternate facilities and resources for those displaced tenants. This incident serves as a reminder that citizens should call their fire department to respond to any and all fires, even those that appear to be extinguished."