



Nov. 6, 2009  
PR# 09-078

## Troopers Rescue Mother and Infant from Home Fire

(KETCHIKAN, Alaska)— Last night at approximately 10:22 p.m. dispatch in Ketchikan received a 911 call. A woman's voice stated an address and then the line went silent. After failed attempts to get in touch with the caller, a trooper unit was sent to the home for a welfare check.

Trooper Jack LeBlanc was the first to arrive at the home. Trooper LeBlanc could hear noise inside the house but no one responded to his calls or knocks and he could not see inside. Trooper LeBlanc, being concerned by the circumstances, called Trooper Zachary Huckstep to request back up. When Trooper Huckstep arrived, he noticed a flame flicker through one of the windows.

The two troopers kicked in the door and were met with thick smoke. They quickly found Melissa Garrison, age 37 of Ketchikan, laying facedown unconscious near the doorway. The troopers were able to pull Garrison from the home and extinguished the fire. After, Trooper Leblanc went to a neighbor's home to summon additional resources and to find out if anyone else was supposed to be inside. While Trooper Leblanc went to the neighbor's house, Trooper Huckstep went back into the home to see if he could locate any other individuals.

The neighbor informed Trooper Leblanc that an infant should also be inside. Just as Trooper LeBlanc was getting back to the home, Troopers Huckstep rushed out with the baby. The baby was found unharmed sleeping in its bedroom.

Garrison, her child and Trooper Huckstep were all transported by North Tongass Fire Department to the local hospital for treatment. The child was released after reaffirmation that no injuries were sustained. Garrison was transported to Seattle for additional treatment. Trooper Huckstep was treated for minor smoke inhalation and released several hours after being admitted.

Upon investigations, it was determined that the fire appears to be accidental. A fire had been going burning in the fireplace in the living room. Blankets and pillows were put around the mantel to keep the child at bay and were not removed after the child was put to bed. The items caught fire and filled the home with smoke. Garrison had attempted to put out the flames but passed out after providing her address to dispatch.

This call is the perfect example of why troopers routinely respond to 911 hang ups and suspicious 911 calls. Had troopers not made it a priority, It is likely that two people would have been significantly injured or killed.

**AST and the Division of Fire and Life Safety would like to remind Alaskans that flammable items, such as pillows and blanket, should never be kept in close proximity to open flames or other heat sources.**



Trooper Jack LeBlanc



Trooper Zachary Huckstep