



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **(Security Light Caused Mooberry Elementary Fire)**

Hillsboro Fire investigators say a school security light removed from its position and placed face down against roofing material is the most likely cause of the early Friday morning fire that heavily damaged the kindergarten building at Mooberry Elementary School at 1230 NE 10th Avenue. Fire Inspector Martin Stapleton, the lead investigator on this incident, found in the debris inside the building the remnants of a 400-watt mercury vapor light that was connected to a timer. Contractors told Stapleton their workers removed the light from its mounted position on the roof of the building, left the wiring connected and placed it in contact with roofing materials. Workers said they were unaware the light was attached to a timer.

“The light came on according to the timer at approximately 10 pm and the fire burned slowly in the roofing material for quite some time before igniting insulation and ceiling material inside the building,” said Inspector Stapleton. “The fire burned quite some time in the ceiling void spaces above the smoke alarms before burning materials fell into the classroom and the resulting smoke activated the alarm system.”

The fire caused extensive damage to one of the divided rooms in the building and heavy smoke, heat and water damage occurred in the remainder of the building. The kindergarten building will require a complete refurbishing of the interior. Damage estimate may reach \$500,000.

Fire investigators arrived at their determination through a process of elimination of all other possible sources of ignition. They conducted interviews with school custodians, roofing contractors and any possible witnesses. They also excavated evidence from the debris at the scene that supports their finding.

For fire and life safety information, visit: [www.ci.hillsboro.or.us/fire](http://www.ci.hillsboro.or.us/fire) or call 503-681-6166. For periodic updates on activities at Hillsboro Fire Department, visit our blog at [www.hillsborofire.blogspot.com](http://www.hillsborofire.blogspot.com).

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