



Berthoud Fire Protection District

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“To Serve, To Care, To Support”

-PRESS RELEASE-

Subject: Heating Unit Related Structure Fires

Date: January 1, 2018 & January 2, 2018

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At 9:05 a.m. on January 1, 2018, Berthoud Fire Protection District (BFPD) responded to a fully involved chicken coop fire on 7th Street. The flames were also burning a nearby tree in the neighboring yard. Our crews quickly put out the fire and no other structures were threatened. Upon investigation, it was discovered that extension cords were leading to the coop and used to power a heating pad that was likely the cause of fire. As many as four chickens did not survive the fire.

A similar fire occurred today, January 2, 2018, at 9:47 a.m. BFPD responded to a fully involved large shed fire on Marshall Court in Berthoud. Two engine crews responded, and when on scene discovered the fire had spread to the exterior wall of the nearby garage as well as the fence on the other side. Heat from the fire did cause slight damage to a neighboring home's exterior paint. The fire was quickly under control and extinguished with a combination of foam and water. The cause was determined by BFPD's Fire Marshal P. Michael Bruner to be accidental, and related to the use of a heat lamp for pet ducks that lived in the shed. The ducks unfortunately perished in the fire. Larimer County Sheriff's Office was also on scene to provide support.

In consideration of the present frequency of these types of fires, BFPD would like to release a **Public Service Announcement** regarding heating chicken coops. The following has been prepared by the Fire Marshal P. Michael Bruner:

Chicken Coop Fire Safety Tips

According to the CSU Extension Office, "Any heating element used in a chicken coop will start a fire eventually." Most coop bedding, insulation and bird feathers can easily ignite when in proximity of a heat source such as a heat lamp or space heater.

- *"If you need to heat your chicken coop, hire an electrician to wire your chicken coop properly! Extension cords cause fires!*
- *Heating lamps need to be secured properly so they cannot fall or be knocked down by a chicken.*
- *Proper clearances of heating sources from anything that can catch on fire!
Heat lamps are not recommended in smaller well insulated coops with mature chickens.
A 25-watt light is enough for laying chickens.*