LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

Report No.: 2008-12-0244
LAPD DR No.: 
Case Status: CLOSED

Dispatch Address/Location
40 UCLA X MOLECULAR SCIENCES BLDG WLA

Incident Address/Location
40 UCLA X MOLECULAR SCIENCES BLDG WLA

Doing Business As
UCLA MOLECULAR SCIENCES

Incident Date: 12/29/2008
Alarm Time: 14:57
Incident #: 0699
First on Scene: RA037
Member Completing NFIRS Report: G. JENKINS #29945
Assignment: BC009

Incident Type
- Fire (other)

Area of Origin
Laboratory

Cause of Ignition
Unintentional

Form of Heat
Chemical reaction

Item First Ignited (general)
Flammable liquid/gas - uncontained

Material Type First Ignited (specific)
Flammable gas (other)

Property Use/Premises
Laboratory or science laboratory

Motive
N/A

Stories
N/A

Floor of Origin
N/A

Make
N/A

Model
N/A

Year
N/A

Color
N/A

License
N/A

State
N/A

VIN No.
N/A

Property Loss
$0.00

Content Loss
$0.00

Acres Burn
N/A

No. Injuries
1

No. Fatal
0

Arson Notified
No

Abbrv. Narrative/Synopsis (Fire Cause, Origin & Travel, M.O., etc.)
A FULL TIME FEMALE LAB TECH EMPLOYEE AT UCLA MOLECULAR SCIENCE BUILDING
WAS WORKING WITH HIGHLY FLAMMABLE CHEMICALS THAT FLASHED
SPONTANEOUSLY WHEN MIXED WITH AIR AND CAUSED SEVERE BURNS TO HER BODY.
THE PATIENT WAS TRANSPORTED TO UCLA AND SUBSEQUENTLY TO GROSSMAN BURN
CENTER IN CRITICAL BUT STABLE CONDITION. FIRE INVOLVED THE FEMALE PATIENT
ONLY: CAUSE: UNINTENTIONAL.

Reported By: Police Other 911 Call (Name/Phone)
UCLA DISPATCH

Investigator: W. ZLENDICK #48715
Investigator: R. HERNANDEZ #48238
Date Assigned: 12/30/2008

Photos:

Yes

No

Evidence:

Location Booked:

Yes

No

Arson K9 Deployed
Yes

No

Supervisor Approving

Date

Entry Date:

Clerk:
## Fire Injury

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<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>DOB</th>
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<th>Comment:</th>
<th>BURN PATIENT.</th>
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## Others

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<td>HARREN</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCLA MOLECULAR SCIENCES</td>
<td>00607 CHARLES E. YOUNG DR, LOS ANGELES, CA 90095</td>
<td>(310)625-6578</td>
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<th>Comment:</th>
<th>PROFESSOR INCHARGE OF UCLA MOLECULAR SCIENCE BLDG.</th>
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CASE SYNOPSIS

A full time female lab tech employee at UCLA Molecular Science Building was working with highly flammable chemicals that flashed spontaneously when mixed with air and caused severe burns to her body. The patient was transported to UCLA and subsequently transferred to Grossman Burn Center in critical but stable condition. The fire did not involve the structure or contents. Cause-UNINTENTIONAL.

SOURCE OF ACTIVITY

On Monday, December 29, 2008, Investigator Hernandez #48238, and I, Investigator Zlendick #48715, were working the Los Angeles Fire Department Arson/Counter Terrorism Section assigned to A-Unit 2. At approximately 1518 hours we were dispatched to investigate a burn victim located at 40 UCLA. The incident was reported to the fire department at approximately 1457 hours, Inc #699. Battalion Chief Everett #51173 of Battalion 9, requested our response.

INVESTIGATION

While en route to the subject location we contacted Battalion 9, Chief Everett who informed us a female lab tech had been working with chemicals that flashed and caused severe burns to her body. He informed us the patient was conscious and being transported by LAFD Rescue 71 to UCLA Medical Center.

We responded to UCLA Medical Center to follow up on the patient’s condition and to get a statement. The transporting paramedics informed me that while en route to the hospital, the victim was alert and oriented, and able to identify herself as [REDACTED]. DOB: [REDACTED]. As per Los Angeles Fire Department Emergency Medical Services Report #CB051435, the Paramedics documented that [REDACTED] had sustained second and third degree burns to her chest, both arms, both hands and thighs.

I spoke with UCLA Medical Center Emergency treating physician Dr. Cooper, MD. She informed me that [REDACTED] was in critical but stable condition and had suffered approximately 40%, total body surface area burns, which involved her front upper torso, both arms, hands and thighs. The burns consisted of second and third degree full thickness burns with no respiratory involvement signs at this time. She further stated they were going to sedate her and we would be able to communicate with her.

After the patient was stabilized I was able to conduct an interview with the patient. The patient made the following statements:

- She is a full time lab tech at UCLA, and was working with a chemical called Perbutyllithium. She was extracting the chemical out of a 4-oz. bottle with a 60 mil. Syringe.
INVESTIGATION (Cont.)

- She pulled the plunger out too far, the plunger came out of the housing of the syringe, and the chemical spilled out and flashed. She stated the chemical would spontaneously ignite if it combines with air.
- She further stated there was also a chemical called Hexane solution that is very flammable that spilled on her clothes that also ignited and caused her clothes to catch fire. She further stated there were three other individuals in the room who came to her aide.

We then proceeded to the incident location, met with Battalion 9, Chief Everett, and informed him of our updated information. We confirmed the information with the lab tech supervisor Professor Patrick Harran. Due to the possible hazardous environment in the subject room, 4221 of the Molecular Science Building, we did not enter and Chief Everett informed us there was no fire damage to the structure or contents.

FOLLOW-UP

On December 30, 2008, I followed up on the patient's condition. The patient had been subsequently transferred to Sherman Oaks Burn Center. I contacted the burn center by telephone, and was advised by the charge nurse that the patient was in critical but stable condition. No further information was available at this time. I requested to be advised of any medical changes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the statements made I am of the opinion that accidentally-exposed air reactive chemicals to the ambient air resulting in burning of her clothing and body.
Cause-UNINTENTIONAL.

CASE STATUS

This case will be listed as COMPLETE.