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NEWS

Blaze reveals grow ops

Dan Hilborn, staff reporter

There was a pungent smell over the Metrotown neighbourhood on Monday afternoon after a fire broke out in an apartment building where six different marijuana grow operations were discovered.

Assistant fire chief George Whitehurst said one of the scariest aspects of the fire in the 6600 block of Telford Avenue was a report that several residents may have been trapped on the upper floor of the three-storey wood frame building.

"I sent a fire crew in to investigate and they found everyone was accounted for," Whitehurst said.

"It had a lot more potential than what actually transpired."

Whitehurst credited the fast work of the Burnaby firefighters in knocking down the two-alarm blaze in the unsprinklered building.

"With all the heavy smoke, it was hard to tell which suites were involved," Whitehurst said.

Firefighters entered the building from a balcony on the front side of the building, and successfully pushed the fire out the back balcony of the suite in question.

Debbie Clyne, the emergency social services coordinator for the city, said approximately 55 residents were displaced by the fire, and the majority are expected to be able to return home within the next few days.

Only two of the building's 42 suites were heavily damaged by the fire and may not be reoccupied for some time, Clyne said.

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