

Space heater may have caused overnight fire on S. Huxley Drive

By **Jim Herr** - January 21, 2019



Cleveland Hill firefighters and their mutual-aid fire companies worked through sub-zero temperatures to save the home from fire at 131 S. Huxley Drive on January 21, 2019. (Jim Herr/Cheektowaga Chronicle)

CHEEKTOWAGA – Four people escaped flames inside their home after it appears a space heater caught fire and burned through to the basement early Monday morning.

Cleveland Hill firefighters and their mutual-aid fire companies worked through sub-zero temperatures to save the home at 131 S. Huxley Drive.

Cleveland Hill Fire Chief Matthew Chowaniec says the first floor was filling with smoke when crews arrived at the home shortly after 3:47 am.

"The family was already evacuated; they were alerted by the smoke detectors. The resident stressed that she thinks the fire started in her son's bedroom with the space heater," Mr. Chowaniec told the Cheektowaga Chronicle.

He says firefighters entered the home and took a hose line into the basement. That's where fire crews found the majority of fire.

"The space heater was right next to a vent, so it started the drywall and the wood flooring on fire and sent the bulk of the flames down and into the basement," says Mr. Chowaniec.

The National Weather Service recorded a temperature of -3 degrees at the time of the fire. The real feel temperature was -24 degrees.

"Luckily we were able to get here quick enough to put the fire out because the first hydrant we tried to hit was frozen shut. We were able to put the fire out with just tank water while we searched for that second hydrant," added Mr. Chowaniec.

They ended up not using the second fire hydrant.

Even though the fire was extinguished quickly, he says he used the extra firefighters from the mutual-aid companies to rotate firefighters into rehab to get warm.



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A mother and her three kids were kept warm in Mr. Chowaniec’s chief’s SUV before being transported to the Cleveland Hill fire hall to await volunteers from the Red Cross.

The Cheektowaga Police Department will investigate the cause of the fire to confirm if it was started by the space heater.

Monday’s fire would be the second one started by a space heater this winter according to Cheektowaga Chronicle archives.

Several people had to jump from windows the day after Christmas when a [space heater started a fire inside an apartment complex at 37 Linda Drive](#).

The National Fire Protection Association has a [few safety tips to follow if you use a space heater in your home](#).

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