Police: Burglary suspect sets stranger's home on fire during hours-long standoff in Salem
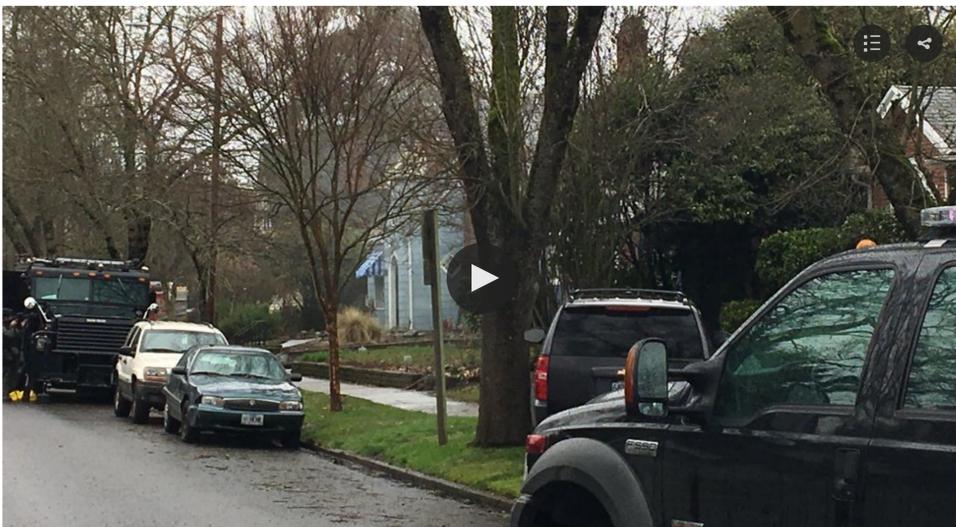
by KATU News | Tuesday, January 22nd 2019

Police: Burglary suspect sets stranger's home on fire during hours-long standoff in Salem

VIEW PHOTO GALLERY
📷 6 photos

SALEM, Ore. – Police took a burglary suspect into custody after he barricaded himself inside a northeast Salem home Tuesday morning.

Officers were called out about 7:30 a.m. on reports that a man, later identified as Kenneth Ketchem, 39, of Salem, was trying to break into several homes in the 1000 block of Capitol Street Northeast.

When officers arrived, they learned that Ketchem ran into a house in the 900 block of Summer Street Northeast. After entering the house through the back door, Ketchem confronted the homeowner and said "he had a gun," Salem Police said. The homeowner managed to flee through the front door; there were no reports of injuries.

During the standoff, Ketchem allegedly started a fire in the home. Salem Fire was called out to the scene, however, they were unable to fight the flames until Ketchem was taken into custody.

"It really is that catch 22 for us," Salem Police Lt. Treven Upkes said. "Our protocol is going to be to wait outside, remain safe."

Law enforcement used a loudspeaker to try and communicate with the suspect, and Salem SWAT surrounded the house.

"The SWAT team was in our backyard," neighbor Susan Garbrecht said. "A lot of tear gas [was] going in there."

At about 1:20 p.m., officials said they managed to take Ketchem into custody. He was taken to the hospital with "injuries," however police have not told KATU News how he was hurt.

Salem fire managed to put out the fire, Salem Police said.

Police closed off several surrounding blocks as a safety precaution, and officials asked the public to avoid the area or to stay in their homes if they live in the neighborhood.

The incident caused Parrish Middle School and North Salem High School to go on lockdown, but the lockdown was lifted around 8:40 a.m.

Salem Police say Ketchem was wanted on eluding charged following an unrelated incident last year.

He is expected to face additional charges of burglary and arson once he's released from the hospital.

Booking photo for Kenneth Ketchem.

MORE TO EXPLORE

Police: Woman raped child as man held him down

19-year-old accused in beating death of girl, 4, who spilled juice on Xbox

'I killed her;' College student stabbed to death by her roommate

DON'T MISS OUT

Stay Connected with KATU

Like

Follow

📷 NEWS IN PICTURES

Conestoga Huts for the homeless a solution for the Northwest?

Your photos: Another stunning sunset in the Pacific Northwest

Storm Tracker Weather Alert: Portland metro likely to see dusting of snow Wednesday

Fire officials: Young boy rescued from burning Vancouver home, one person injured