



BREMERTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Update on Investigation Regarding August 18 Gas Explosion

Detectives from the Bremerton Police Department have taken statements and continued to investigate the circumstances leading up to the gas explosion which occurred at a motel off Kitsap Way on August 18th. The department can now release information relative to reports from witnesses and people in the area reporting that someone was coming out of a window on the east end of the building before the gas leak was reported.

Officers and detectives on the scene the night of the incident were told that someone was seen coming out of a window near the gas meter located at the east end just before the leak was reported. In addition, it was reported that night that officers were at the motel prior to the report of the gas leak to investigate a domestic violence incident.

Based on additional investigation and statements taken since that night, the department can now provide the following information. Officers were called to the motel to handle a disturbance of some kind related to a family dispute. Officers were just arriving when the gas leak was reported, and they diverted their attention to evacuation. The report of the disturbance was in relation to a juvenile female who had fled her home in Brownsville following a family argument. Her step-father, who lives in the home, had spoken with her by cell phone, located her, and had taken her to the motel to let everyone cool down and keep her away from her mother.

According to information we now have, the mother apparently showed up at the motel, and the step-father apparently coordinated with another male to get the juvenile female out of the motel. The step-father has admitted that he stepped on the gas meter to assist his step-daughter out of the second floor window. The step-daughter may also have contacted the meter and the pipes leading to it. The man has further admitted that after contacting the meter and pipes they heard a loud hissing sound, but the three immediately left and drove away in a Suburban type vehicle. This is apparently the vehicle reported by some witnesses as being in the area just before the leak was reported. The manager and others noted the hissing sound, and began evacuation shortly thereafter.

It should be noted that this information is just one among many of the circumstances that may have led to the explosion. The meter, the pipes and all other mechanical and physical circumstances leading up to the explosion over thirty minutes later are still being investigated by the Bremerton Fire Department, Bremerton Police, and the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF).

The names of the persons involved are not being released at this time. The entire file will be referred to the Kitsap County Prosecutor's Office, and any decisions on possible criminal charges would be made by that office. The entire investigation may take weeks or months to be completed.

"There is much more work to be done, but we wanted to address this particular report as soon as possible because so many people were affected by this explosion," said Bremerton Police Chief Steve Strachan; adding "our detectives will continue to work with our colleagues at the Fire Dept. and ATF to bring some closure to this case."

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