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Apartment fire reveals grow-op

Chad Skelton, Reporter

The Vancouver Sun

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Firefighters battling a blaze Monday at a low-rise apartment complex in Burnaby stumbled across marijuana growing operations in four separate suites.

Assistant Burnaby Fire Chief George Whitehurst said firefighters were called to the complex in the 6300-block of Telford at 11:22 a.m. and it took them about an hour to get the blaze under control.

The fire began in a unit on the third-floor and while the cause of the fire is still under investigation, Whitehurst said firefighters suspect a growing operation found in the suite may have been the cause.

As 30 firefighters battled the blaze, they feared there may have been residents still inside the building.

"We had reports that certain individuals may have been trapped on the third floor," said Whitehurst.

To ensure there were no residents inside, firefighters checked every unit in the building.

And while that search found there were no people inside, it did turn up three more growing operations.

"It's now a crime scene," said Whitehurst, saying police would investigate the growing operations.

He said it's not unusual for his members to stumble across growing operations and meth labs - which, because of the chemicals and wiring involved, can pose a serious risk to firefighters.

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