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Vehicle Sets Itself on Fire in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini and Lee Borrowman



MOFD fire crew at the scene Photo Stephen Healy

at rest," said Healy, "it is a rare occurrence, but we had another fire that occurred in a garage in Moraga in the past year."

Five apparatus were dispatched to the scene, as is normal procedure, and the fire was put out in less than an hour.

"Junipers grew on that property," said Healy, "those are extremely flammable bushes, containing oils like eucalyptuses trees, and they burn vigorously once ignited."

Healy recommends that residents check fire-safe landscaping guidelines and seriously consider replacing juniper with other types of fire resistant vegetation. Healy recommends the U.S. Fire Administration's website for information: <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/fswy12.pdf>

Moraga Orinda Fire District Fire Marshall Mike Mentink urges residents to use caution when working with power tools which may produce sparks during periods of high fire danger. Sparks from a grinding tool ignited dry vegetation behind Grizzly Peak Stables on Lomas Contadas in Orinda on August 10. The fire burned 1.5 acres before being extinguished.

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A Moraga resident awoke to the light of flames coming from his Volvo that was parked in his driveway on Sandringham Drive South at about 2:00 a.m. on Friday, August 7. The fire quickly spread to nearby vegetation. According to Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Battalion Chief Stephen Healy, the homeowner acted quickly to evacuate his family from the home after realizing that the fire could spread to the house.

Five crews from MOFD and two from Contra Costa County Fire responded to the vehicle, which was totally destroyed by the fire. No injuries were reported.

The next day traces of the fire were visible on the garage door of the property. A pine tree in front showed burned branches on one side. The owner of the used Volvo explained that the car caught fire spontaneously during the night.

Battalion Chief Healy concurred. "Modern vehicles are outfitted with a complex array of electronic systems and it is possible for them to catch fire even when the vehicle is