

ABC NEWS

Volunteer firefighter charged with arson over blaze at Tasmanian fire station

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PHOTO: The blaze at Middleton Fire Station caused about \$600,000 in damage. (ABC News: Rhiana Whitson)

A 28-year-old volunteer firefighter has been charged in relation to a deliberately lit fire that destroyed a Tasmanian fire station.

MAP: Middleton 7163

The man, whose name has not been released, has also been suspended from duty with the Tasmania Fire Service following the charges, which include attempted arson of the same fire depot a week earlier in July.

"The man is a volunteer member of the Middleton Volunteer Fire Brigade. Given the severity of the charges he will be suspended from duty pending the outcome of the court process," the TFS said in a statement today.

The ABC reported a group of volunteer firefighters were the first to respond to the deliberately lit blaze about 7:00pm on Saturday July 8.

The firefighters entered the burning building, and three of them tried to open the station's roller door before the fourth drove the burning fire truck through the half-open door.

Once the truck was out the crew were able to use the truck's water storage and pumps to start fighting the blaze.

The fire has been estimated to have caused about \$600,000 in damage including to two fire trucks.

Fire service in damage control

"We appreciate this is a difficult and disappointing time for the Middleton community, the dedicated members of the Middleton Fire Brigade and our wider TFS community, and we will provide every support possible to those affected," chief officer with Tasmania Fire Service Chris Arnol said in a statement today.

"TFS is an organisation of more than 5,000 dedicated volunteers and employees who represent a diverse cross section of our community and are committed to protecting life and property.

"It is not appropriate for us to comment further as the matter is before the courts."

The man will appear in court on August 21, 2017.

Anyone with information about the incident is urged to contact Tasmania Police on 131 444, or Crime Stoppers anonymously at crimestopperstas.com.au or phone 1800 333 000.

Topics: arson, fires, disasters-and-accidents, law-crime-and-justice, middleton-7163

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