



THE COUNTY OF KAUA'I

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News Release

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Firefighters extinguish brush fire near Salt Pond, Kaua'i police arrest suspect

HANAPĒPĒ – Firefighters responded to a brush fire near Salt Pond Beach Park and Burns Field in Hanapēpē Friday afternoon, which resulted in the arrest of a 40-year-old man for suspicion of arson.

No injuries or structural damages were reported.

Multiple units were dispatched to the scene shortly before 12:30 p.m. to find an area of brush burning in the location known as Burns Field.

Firefighters from the Hanapēpē fire station were first on scene and were soon assisted by personnel from the Kalāheo and Waimea fire stations, along with Rescue 3, Air 1, KFD's Training Bureau, and the on-duty battalion chief. The Hawai'i Army National Guard also responded to the incident, in addition to a crew from the Department of Public Works who assisted with a water tender and compact loader.

Homeless individuals in the area were evacuated by the Kaua'i Police Department. Kuiloko and Lokokai roads were closed to incoming traffic while crews were responding to the fire.

The fire was deemed under control at approximately 2:15 p.m. and fully extinguished shortly before 5:30 p.m., leaving roughly 5 acres of land scorched. Crews later returned to the area to extinguish reported hot spots that flared up at approximately 8 p.m., and cleared the scene at 8:45 p.m.



Kaua'i police arrested Jeremy Riopta, 40, who has no permanent address, on suspicion of arson in the second degree.

According to a preliminary investigation, several witnesses reported that Riopta allegedly lit a mattress on fire in the vicinity of the Salt Pond Beach Park homeless camp and as the fire spread, he was seen feeding it with dried brush.

Riopta remains in custody and his bail is set at \$5,000.

The investigation remains ongoing.



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