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DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

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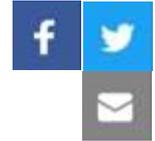
Idaho Department of Insurance News Release

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Fatal Payette Fire Undetermined

BOISE ID – Idaho State Fire Marshal's Office investigators are unable to determine the exact cause of a fire that killed Phil Skelly, 79 and his wife Darlene at their home in Payette. The fire occurred in the late evening hours of Tuesday, January 2.

Firefighters from the Payette Fire Department responded just before midnight to the home located at 170 S 19th Street after several 911 calls reporting the fire. Upon their arrival, the home was fully engulfed in flames. Firefighters were unable to gain entry to perform a rescue into the home due to the magnitude of fire.

"The area of fire origin was evident," said Idaho State Fire Marshal Knute Sandahl. "The living room where a dining room table became the focus of the investigation."

A hole in the floor suggests the fire burned for up to two hours before being noticed by witnesses, who called 911. Several potential sources of ignition were examined with no clear evidence that one was the cause of the fire. "Fires involving fatalities are especially difficult and receive top priority," said Sandahl. "Every effort is made by investigators to provide answers for the family of the victims." In this case, a cause could not definitely be determined. "No investigator, whatever the circumstances, wants the cause of a fire to be undetermined." "We can say, this fire is not suspicious," said Sandahl.

Smoke alarms were reported to be present. However, none were reported to have sounded or found. Everyone is reminded to install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside bedrooms, each living area, and every floor of your home. They should be checked once a month and batteries replaced yearly, if needed. Smoke alarms ten or more years old should also be replaced.

About the Department of Insurance

The Idaho Department of Insurance has been regulating the business of insurance in Idaho since 1901. The mission of the Department is to equitably, effectively and efficiently administer the Idaho Insurance Code and the International Fire Code. For more information, visit www.doi.idaho.gov.

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