

*State of Idaho*  
**DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE**

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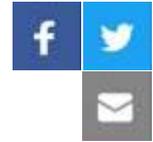
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**Idaho Department of Insurance News Release**

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**National Arson Awareness Week- May 6-12, 2018**

The Idaho State Fire Marshal's Office has conducted 147 fire investigations since 2017, eight of which involved vacant or abandoned buildings, and determined that three were arson. One such investigation is into a January 29th fire in Burley, Idaho that consumed two commercial buildings. A combined \$15,000 reward is being offered by the State Fire Marshal's Office and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms for information leading to the arrest of anyone involved in this incident. According to the Idaho Fire Incident Reporting System, Idaho fire departments responded to 39 fires in vacant or abandoned buildings in 2017.

May 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> is National Arson Awareness Week, and the theme for 2018 is "Reducing Arson at Vacant and Abandoned Buildings." Idaho State Fire Marshal Knute Sandahl says, "Vacant and abandoned buildings can be an attractive nuisance, especially for an arsonist. Burned out buildings can be seen as a blight on a community or neighborhood. These are often still very usable buildings with a bit of TLC. Loss of any building due to fire can have a negative impact on a community's economy. Fires in vacant and abandoned buildings are often large and pose significant risk to firefighters and neighbors."

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, 34 percent of vacant residential building fires in the United States were caused by intentional actions, and according to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, there have been an average of 550 reported incendiary/arson fires per year at properties reported as abandoned, vacant-secured and vacant-unsecured, uninhabited, idle, not routinely used, and being demolished. The National Fire Protection Association reports that fires in vacant buildings are more likely to have been intentionally set and spread beyond the building than fires in other structures.

The Idaho State Fire Marshal's Office is using the week of May 6-12, 2018 to focus on the importance of cooperative efforts with fire and emergency services departments, law enforcement, public works, insurance companies and the justice system to help prevent the crime of arson at vacant and abandoned buildings.

**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 serve and protect Idahoans by equitably, effectively and efficiently administering the Idaho Insurance Code and the International Fire Code. For more information, visit [doi.idaho.gov](http://doi.idaho.gov).