

State of Idaho
DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

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Idaho Department of Insurance News Release

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Post Falls Church Fire Investigation Completed

POST FALLS, ID (March 24, 2026) – Investigators with the Idaho State Fire Marshal’s Office have concluded their investigation into the March 15 fire that destroyed the River Church and Little Explorers preschool in Post Falls.

Initial reports from Kootenai County Fire & Rescue noted three separate burning areas inside the structure. Because this raised concern for possible criminal activity, additional resources were requested, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), an accelerant-detection K-9 team from Spokane County Fire District 4, and the Post Falls Police Department.

Investigative efforts focused on the three burn areas. Neither detection equipment nor the K-9 team found evidence of accelerants. Investigators did find that each burn location involved a natural gas-fueled appliance. Detailed examination revealed significant fire damage in and around appliance control valves and pilot lights. This led investigators to examine the building’s exterior natural gas regulator and meter.

The regulator was found to have deteriorated over time due to weather and other factors. This deterioration caused the regulator to fail in the open position, resulting in over-pressurization of the building’s gas system and connected appliances.

The regulator and meter have been secured for further analysis by a forensic engineering laboratory on behalf of the building owner’s insurance carrier.

The fire has been officially classified as accidental.

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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, please visit us at doi.idaho.gov or email us at consumeraffairs@doi.idaho.gov.

About the Idaho State Fire Marshal's Office

The State Fire Marshal's Office participates in and coordinates an integrated statewide system designed to protect human life from fire and explosions through fire prevention, investigation and public education activities. The program involves fire prevention activities, fire/arson investigation, code enforcement and the operation of the National Fire Incident Reporting System. The State Fire Marshal's Office provides assistance to local fire agencies throughout the state.