

FIRE DEPARTMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

Date Of Release: 10/17/2021
Fire Incident Number: 21-0089024
Incident Commander: Ventura City Fire Dept, Battalion 7, Matt Brock
Incident Type: Encampment debris fire
Date/Time of Incident: 10/17/2021 1:06pm
Incident Location: Victoria Ave at Santa Clara River bridge, Ventura, CA
Cause/Origin: Unattended fire
Injuries Reported: None
Units Committed On-Scene: One engine and one Battalion Chief
Total Fire Personnel On-Scene: 4
Agencies Involved: Ventura City Fire Department

Narrative: Ventura City Fire units encountered a unique and dangerous fire condition in a void space within the Victoria Ave. bridge over the Santa Clara River watershed. A fire response was sent to investigate smoke in the area of the bridge. Upon arrival fire units located a smoldering fire inside the structure of the bridge itself. Unknown persons had set up a camp inside the void space and left a smoldering fire unattended. A significant amount of combustible debris in the space contributed to the spread of the fire. The void space is a design feature of the bridge which allows authorities to periodically inspect the bridge for safety. Due to the dangerous confined space, firefighters had limited access and ability to fully extinguish the fire. The bridge serves as a major traffic thoroughfare for commuters between Ventura and Oxnard. No responsible party was identified and no injuries were reported.

The Ventura City Fire Department is committed to working with the City's Safe & Clean Program and regional partners to address any ongoing life-safety and property threats posed by homeless encampments in Ventura. Fires can occur in the river bottom because of homeless individuals living in the area who use fire often for warmth and cooking.

Ventura City Fire Department
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