



Chris Clark

Sheriff-Coroner

MEDIA RELEASE

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Sheriff-Coroner

5200 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

(831) 454-7616 FAX: (831) 454-7608



Media Release: March 18, 2026 Arson Investigation

At approximately 4:43 a.m. on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, deputies responded to the Santa Cruz County Fire Station 34 McDermott, at 7276 Empire Grade Road following reports of a fully involved water tender. The fire was quickly extinguished, and a search of the structure was conducted. Based on preliminary findings, the incident is believed to be arson.

No injuries were reported, but the water tender was a total loss. However, due to the rapid response of firefighters, the station itself was saved. While the building sustained some water and smoke damage, mitigation efforts are underway. Resources have been relocated to ensure there is no disruption to emergency services in the community.

The Sheriff's Office is working in coordination with the Santa Cruz County Fire Department and CAL FIRE investigators on this case. We also extend our thanks to the Felton Fire Protection District for their assistance. As detectives and crime scene investigators continue processing evidence, anyone with information is asked to contact Detective Malone at 831-454-7636.

Contact: Ashley Keehn, Department Communications Officer
Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office

Follow us on:

