



# Eureka Police Department

## PRESS RELEASE

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**Eureka Police Department**

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09/22/2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Subject: UPDATE on Acid Bomb Explosion at Bayshore Mall**

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On 9/05/11, at about 1:43 PM, officials with the Eureka Fire Department (EFD) and Eureka Police Department (EPD) were dispatched to the Bayshore Mall (3300 Broadway) regarding an explosion in a hallway there. Upon arrival, they found remnants and scattered debris from an apparent "muriatic acid and aluminum foil bomb" packaged in a 2-liter plastic soda bottle. (See original press release below).

EPD Criminal Investigation Services detectives reviewed video surveillance footage of the incident, which depicted four juvenile suspects who were involved in planting and detonating the homemade explosive device in a hallway. Detectives developed several leads and eventually identified the suspects: three males and a female ranging from 13 years old to 15 years old. According to the lead investigator, Senior Detective Ronald Harpham, evidence suggests three of the juveniles violated criminal conspiracy laws and a 13 year-old male suspect violated a law pertaining to possession of an explosive device in a public place. None of the juvenile suspects had prior criminal histories or negative contacts with local law enforcement. The investigation is now complete and the criminal case has been forwarded to the Humboldt County District Attorney's Office.

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ORIGINAL PRESS RELEASE FROM 9/06/11

On 9/05/11, at about 1:43 PM, the Eureka Fire Department (EFD) was dispatched to the Bayshore Mall (3300 Broadway) regarding an explosion in a hallway there. Upon arrival, EFD officials found remnants and scattered debris from an apparent "muriatic acid and aluminum foil bomb" packaged in a 2-liter plastic soda bottle.

At approximately 2:00 PM, Eureka Police Department officers were dispatched to the mall to assist EFD with the resulting criminal investigation and evidence collection. EPD investigators reviewed mall security surveillance footage, which depicted four juvenile suspects (3 males and



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## PRESS RELEASE

one female approximately 13-years old) who were involved in planting and detonating the homemade explosive device in a hallway.

In the video, the juvenile suspects were seen entering the mall hallway together through an entrance/exit on the south side of the mall near Spencer's. One of the male juveniles is then seen returning to the door alone moments later, removing the 2-liter plastic bottle/explosive device from his backpack and mixing/shaking its components together. The suspect then sets the device on the floor near the door and walks quickly away from it. Approximately 3 minutes later, the bomb detonates. As the suspect walks away from the acid bomb he just planted, an unsuspecting woman is seen on video walking past him and the device and exiting through the doorway.

No property appeared to have been damaged by the explosion and there were no reported injuries. However, debris and muriatic acid from the device was scattered across the floor and walls.

EPD investigators are currently following up on leads they've developed. EPD would like to emphasize that this is not being treated as a mere "prank," but rather as a serious crime. The suspect(s) committed at least two felonies: 1) possession and detonation of an illegal explosive device in a public place, and 2) releasing noxious/injurious gases/liquids in a public place.

Muriatic acid (also called hydrochloric acid) is available over the counter at many hardware stores. It is a highly corrosive, strong acid commonly used for many industrial applications such as leather processing and cleaning masonry surfaces. When mixed with aluminum foil, a chemical reaction occurs which creates hydrogen gas. When these ingredients are put together inside a sealed container such as a 2-liter water bottle, the resulting gas expands inside the container until a loud explosion with an ensuing noxious white cloud occurs.

Muriatic acid is irritating and corrosive to living tissue (mild to severe burns of the eyes and skin can occur). Brief, low level exposure can cause irritation of the eyes, skin, and respiratory system. Higher level exposure can result in chemical burns, breathing difficulties, swelling and spasms of the throat, accumulation of fluid in the lungs and even suffocation and death. Additionally, if an individual were to be in close proximity to a muriatic acid and aluminum foil bomb when it exploded, the explosion itself could cause significant tissue damage.

Anyone with information concerning the suspects' identities is asked to call the Eureka Police Department. Please direct your inquiries/information to the lead investigator, Senior Detective Ron Harpham, at 707-441-4305.





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