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Suspect in Toronto's summer arson cases arrested

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Toronto police have arrested a 40-year-old suspect in connection with a rash of fires in the city's west end over the summer.

The suspect faces 15 charges in connection with a number of blazes that were set in the Parkdale and Liberty Village neighbourhoods over the summer.

Police are currently investigating whether the suspect is the same man wanted in a number of other fire offences in the Christie Pitts park area.

He is one of many "persons of interest" in that case, police say.

"By virtue of the proximity of those fires and (the others) he is a person of interest," said Det. Marcel Chiasson at a news conference on Tuesday.

He added that police have a number of persons of interest in that case.

The arrest was the result of an arson task force that police formed this past summer to tackle the growing problem.

Police cautioned residents last summer after they investigated nearly two dozen fires in a short period of time. They said they believed the fires were deliberately set and asked the public to report any suspicious activities.

Authorities began their investigation on July 2, 2007 when several residents in the area of Christie Pitts park reported fire damage to their homes, garages and cars.

The reports came in between 4:20 a.m. and 5:15 a.m.

Then on July 30, eleven fires were reported in the Queen and Dufferin Streets area during the night of July 30, 2007.

Garbage cans and garages near Queen Street between Strachan and Dunn Avenues were set on fire.

Police issued another public warning in August after four fires were reported in the city's Parkdale neighbourhood on the night of Aug. 10, 2007.

Three structures, including a newly constructed townhouse were set ablaze. A studio located in the Sudbury and Florence Streets area was also targeted.

Chiasson wouldn't provide too many details on what led police to the suspect but he did say their investigation yielded many clues.

He also said two people whose homes were vandalized provided important information to police.

"What I can say is that during the investigation things did come out regarding those locations that may have indicated that a person had more than one relationship to a particular address," he said.

Nobody was injured as a result of the fires and Chiasson said about \$18,000 of damage was caused to properties.

At the time of the fires, the suspect was a transient with no fixed address, Chiasson said. However, he was tracked to his family's home in Burlington.

A suspect, Liam Campbell, was taken into custody on Monday. He is charged with 14 counts of property damage and one count of disregarding human life.