



**HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE  
MEDIA ALERT**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 28, 2009**

**CONTACT: HFD Assistant Fire Chief Kevin Alexander, 713-607-0085**

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**Joint Press Conference - Update on Gallery Furniture Fire**

**WHAT:** The Houston Fire Department Fire and Arson Division and The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) will give an update to the investigation of the May 21, 2009, Gallery Furniture Fire.

**WHEN:** Today, July 28, 2009 at 2:45p.m.

**WHERE:** HFD Logistics, 1205 Dart Street, 2nd Floor Command Room

**DETAILS:** The Gallery Furniture fire is one of the highest dollar loss fires that the HFD has investigated with an estimated loss of \$18-20 Million.

The HFD Fire & Arson Investigation Division was the lead agency in this investigation and ATF assisted in this investigation. The Harris County District Attorney's Office also provided legal guidance during this investigation.

Through the hard work, diligence and cooperative efforts of Investigators from the Fire & Arson Investigation Division and Special Agents from ATF, First Degree Arson Charges have been filed on a former employee of Gallery Furniture. This former employee is in custody.

Those who will be present at today's press conference are:

HFD Chief Investigator Alison Stein  
HFD Sr. Investigator Supervisor Cynthia Vargas  
HFD Investigators John Fugate and Gilbert Palacios

ATF Special Agent in Charge Rob Elder, Houston ATF Office  
ATF Special Agents Matt Abowd and Joel Marquez

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***Working Smoke Detectors Save Lives!***