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4 puppies perish in Webster house fire; space heater is thought to be the cause

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WEBSTER — Four puppies were killed Thursday afternoon in a fire believed to be caused by a space heater in a house on LeBoeuf Lane.

The homeowner was away when the two-alarm fire started before 4 p.m.

Fire Chief Brian Hickey said two adult dogs were also taken from the fire at 2 LeBoeuf Lane to Tufts University's Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine in Grafton; he did not know their condition Thursday night.

The chief said the homeowner returned around 4 p.m. Thursday to find the house full of smoke. Police and personnel from Webster EMS entered the house and were able to get the two grown dogs out. But the four puppies perished, the chief said.

The chief said Webster EMS personnel put the adult dogs in their command sport-utility vehicle and took them to a local veterinary hospital, and later to Tufts.

The chief said he believes the dogs may have dragged a blanket too close to a space heater that was left on in the kitchen. He said the fire extended into a nearby wall and into the basement. He called a second alarm, which brought help from Douglas and Dudley firefighters.

The fire was quickly brought under control, but firefighters stayed at the house for nearly two hours making sure flames hidden in walls and ceilings were extinguished.

The homeowner, who was the only occupant, would not be able to stay there Thursday night, Chief Hickey said. He said the homeowner was working on getting emergency repairs made to the house's electrical system so it could be warmed enough to prevent the pipes from freezing.

The chief praised the efforts to rescue the dogs by Webster EMS, which is a private emergency medical service that responds to all structure fires in town.

"That's just the type of people we have in this town," the chief said.

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