

Man charged with arson in connection with fire that damaged apartment building, killed dog

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MANCHESTER, N.H. —

A Manchester man is facing several charges after police say he intentionally started a fire in his apartment that spread throughout the three-story building.

The fire killed a dog, some residents were injured and everyone who lived in the building was displaced, officials said.

Anthony Cote, 37, is accused of starting a fire on July 10 in his apartment on Hevey Street. He was arrested after a joint investigation conducted by Manchester police and fire officials.

Investigators allege Cote set the fire inside his third floor apartment by lighting a chair on fire. According to a court affidavit, Cote told a responding officer "I started it." It also says Cote later told police he lit a rag on fire, put it in cleaning solution and left it on a kitchen chair.

Manchester Deputy Chief Ryan Chashin said fire was so intense that it took nearly 100 firefighters to gain control of it.

The building is still standing, but it is heavily damaged.

"At this time, it looks like the building looks to be a complete and total loss. The insurance company is looking into it. That could change," Chashin said. "We're just happy that we got everybody out of the building that day. That's what matters."

The dog that died was Cote's own pet. Police accused Cote of leaving his dog locked in a crate while the apartment burned.

Cote is being charged with arson, a felony, and cruelty to animals, a misdemeanor. He is being held in preventative detention.