

# Sheriff



**Larry Ashley, Okaloosa County Sheriff**

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January 1, 2012

## **CRESTVIEW WOMAN CHARGED WITH IMPERSONATING A FIREFIGHTER**



Sarah Elizabeth Barnes

A Crestview woman is charged with impersonating a firefighter, misuse of the 9-1-1 emergency system, and trespassing.

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office arrested 19-year old Sara Elizabeth Barnes of Regent Road in Crestview on January 15<sup>th</sup>.

A deputy had been called to 1530 Trotter Way in Baker, where a home had caught fire the night before and was a total loss. A family member of the victims had spotted two females on the property. She asked them what they were doing there and one responded that she "works for the Baker Fire Department" and had stopped by to make sure the fire had not restarted. The home however is not in the Baker Fire Department's fire jurisdiction. The defendant was wearing shorts and was asked why she wasn't in uniform. She responded by calling 9-1-1 and reporting smoke and flames coming from the residence. She also began putting on a pair of bunker gear trousers.

An arriving OCSO deputy said he did not see any areas of smoke and flames. The North Okaloosa Fire Department Chief came to the scene and said the female, later identified as Barnes, is



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not a certified firefighter. He examined the scene and found no evidence of a flare-up.

A member of the Baker Fire Department also verified that Barnes is not a firefighter and is not to be in possession of firefighter gear outside of a fire station. He advised Barnes had started fire training three times and quit all three times.

In the 9-1-1 tape, Barnes identifies herself as an off-duty firefighter with the Baker Fire Department and reports smoke and flames coming from the residence. Deputies believe Barnes called 9-1-1 to make a false report in an effort to legitimize her unauthorized presence at the previously burnt residence, after being confronted by the family member.

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