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******PRESS RELEASE****WALLA WALLA POLICE DEPT******

Explosion seriously injures two

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A large explosion in the basement of a rental property at 517 Chase Avenue seriously injured two men this afternoon at 3:28 p.m. It is believed the explosion was the result of a process to extract Hash oil from Marijuana. The process involves the use of butane, which is extremely flammable. An on-duty police officer was within 200 feet at the time of the explosion and was able to pull one of the men from the rubble.

The resident—Johny Ray Johnson, 60, and Thomas J. McCarthy, 32, were in the basement of the residence when the explosion occurred, seriously burning both men. They were airlifted to a Seattle area hospital for 2nd and 3rd degree burns. A 12 year old girl, 5 year old boy, and a woman were also at the property at the time of the explosion and were not injured. The boy could not be found for a short period of time as he had run to a neighbor's house.

The explosion caused extreme damage to the residence, collapsing part of the structure and pushing out exterior walls and windows away from the foundation.

Detectives from the Special Teams Unit and the Fire Investigator from the Walla Walla Fire Department are investigating the explosion.

This is the 2nd explosion reported in the city suspected to be caused by this extraction process.

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