

Man sets himself on fire at McDonald's in east Vancouver, investigation launched

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IIO called in after a man sets himself on fire at a McDonald's in East Vancouver **GOOGLE STREETVIEW**

B.C.'s police watchdog has been called in after a man set himself and a McDonald's restaurant on fire as police tried to negotiate with him Thursday night.

The Independent Investigations Office, which is called in when someone is injured while in contact with police officers, confirmed early Friday that staff had been sent to the restaurant on Commercial Drive.

Vancouver police were called shortly after 9 p.m. about a distraught man in his 30s, who entered a McDonald's restaurant near East Broadway carrying a gasoline can and threatening to harm himself.

Witnesses said he poured gas around the restaurant as people fled.

VPD spokesman Sgt. Jason Robillard said the crowded restaurant was evacuated and police attempted to negotiate with the man for about 40 minutes. He said it was a "high-risk" situation, not just for everyone in the restaurant but also for the officers involved.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

The VPD said negotiations with the man were unsuccessful.

The man lit himself and parts of the restaurant on fire. Officers used an ARWEN gun, which fires non-lethal rounds, and firefighters used a high-pressure water hose on the man, in attempts to subdue him.

We were just there. A guy who said he was inside told us some guy had a jerry can and a lighter, sloshed some accelerant all over (you could smell it) then the cops moved everybody off the block.

— Garth "Spud" Mullins (@garthmullins) March 16, 2018

The man has a history of mental illness, added Robillard. "We deal with these types of situations every day, but this one was extreme," he said.

Robillard could not confirm reports the man had threatened other patrons, and would not comment on the details of how the ARWEN rounds came to be fired.

He said the water hose was used by the fire department to put out the flames.

The man was taken to hospital with serious burns and remained in hospital on Friday.

Vancouver police said the restaurant sustained some property damage.

Video of the incident shared on Facebook shows firefighters entering the restaurant.
(Warning: Strong language)
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