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NEWS



Milton Fire Department photo

Firefighters survey the damage from a barn fire that claimed the life of five horses Friday morning.

### 5 HORSES KILLED IN RURAL MILTON BARN FIRE

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A rural barn fire early Dec. 21 has claimed the life of five horses.

Two were killed immediately while three others had to be euthanized after a fire broke out at the Firstline Training Centre - in the Arkell Road and First Nasagaweya Line area - around 1:30 a.m.

Milton and Halton Hills firefighters arrived to find, according to Milton Fire Chief Dave Pratt, a 30-foot section of the exterior wall ablaze.

They quickly assisted the facility's staff in removing 35 of 37 horses, which took roughly 30 minutes.

"You don't just open the door and yell for them to get out," said Pratt, speaking to his department's previous experience rescuing horses.

"You have to lead them out and hand them off to handlers."

Three of the horses removed from the barn had to be put down due to the extent of their injuries. The other horses have been relocated to locations that could fa-

cilitate them.

The cause of the fire is still undetermined.

The Ontario Fire Marshal has taken over the investigation.

Pratt said it's believed the fire originated in the area where a front-end loader was parked.

Woodbine Mohawk Park has made available its backstretch barn area for the surviving horses.

As of Dec. 21, a total of 26 horses trained by Mark Steacy are currently being stabled in Mohawk Park's Barn Eight.

"Everyone at Woodbine Entertainment was devastated to wake up Friday to the news of the barn fire at First Line Training Centre," said Jessica Buckley, President of Woodbine Mohawk Park.

"We're grateful that so many horses survived the fire and that we can make our barn area available for the horses and the Steacy stable during this difficult time."

A moment of silence in memory of the horses lost was to be held before the Dec. 21 card of live racing.

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