



September 4, 2009

Three escape Licking River boat fire

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Three people escaped a boat fire that broke out just after 6 p.m. Friday on the Licking River, the tributary to the Ohio River that runs between Covington and Newport.

Their 28-foot cabin boat was not so lucky. The boat burned down to the water line and the remainder of it sunk, according to Boone County Water Rescue Capt. Dale Appel.

The cause of the fire was unclear Friday evening.

Boone County Water Rescue always has a boat on patrol each Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Appel said; it was that boat that first arrived at the fire. The three men aboard the cabin boat swam to shore and were picked up by the rescue team.

"It was a pretty intense fire," Appel said. "All fire boats suck water from the bottom or the side (of the boat) and our boat sucked up too much debris and quit ... when it quit we had to sit there and watch."

But soon boats from Wilder, Covington and Cincinnati arrived. The Wilder boat arrived, but its hoses quit, when it too sucked up large pieces of debris, Appel said.

The boats from Covington and Cincinnati extinguished the flames before the remainder of the boat sunk, Appel said.

The fire took place just north of where the Licking River flows under Interstate 275.

This is the first boat fire this year, Appel said.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources handled traffic control on the water and the Coast Guard was also called out, Appel said.

Boone County Water Rescue has a fleet of 10 watercraft, ranging from jet skis to the 36-foot fire boat that was used Friday night, Appel said.
