

**2007**

**KANNAPOLIS, N.C.** -- A Kannapolis home is in pieces after an electric water heater exploded inside early Thursday.

Firefighters were called to the vacant house on Independence Square just before 6 a.m. They found the home destroyed, but it was not on fire.

During their investigation, they found part of the water heater nearly 70 feet away from the building – it shot up through the roof, over a building and landed in a driveway. Debris was scattered more than 300 feet from the residence.

“There were a lot of missiles and shrapnel. Fortunately nobody got hurt,” said Donnie Galloway, a relative of the homeowner.

The explosion sent parts of the cinder block foundation through the windows of a neighbor’s house and a pickup truck.

“It's unreal because my parents live right here, and they sit on the back porch every morning, and the way the glass broke it would have probably killed one of them,” said Kevin Reynolds, whose parents live next door to the destroyed home.

Fire investigators determined that water heater, made in the 1950s, did not have an overpressure valve. For some reason the pressure built up and caused the explosion.

Reynolds said he hopes anyone else with an old water heater that’s still in use makes sure it has a pressure release valve.

"You need to check it. You can see right here what it'll do if you ain't got one in your water heater -- without it you could kill yourself," he said.

The damage to the home, which was just being used for storage, is estimated at \$20,000.