

# Man tells Santa Cruz police he vandalized holiday lights

Crime & Criminals

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By David L. Beck

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Santa Cruz police say they know who cut the downtown Christmas lights: a 22-year-old carpet installer from Aptos who they say got drunk Saturday night and used his carpet knife on the holiday display.

The man was not arrested and was not being named Tuesday, although the district attorney's office could decide to file charges, said Sgt. Steve Clark.

Clark said the man confessed, apologized, admitted being drunk and offered to pay for the damage.

Downtown Association Executive Director Keith Holtaway declined to comment on the offer until he had more concrete

evidence of it.

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The lights were wrapped around the trunks of the trees on Pacific Avenue. Holtaway said he walked the avenue Tuesday taking stock of the damage, and found the lights on 140 out of 227 trees cut.

He estimated the cost of replacing them at \$1,750, plus labor, and said it would be next week before his association could obtain them.

Clark said police identified the man by checking their own logs. It turned out an officer on patrol had questioned the man that night for "suspicious activity."

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