



NEWS RELEASE

Date: November 27, 2007
Release: Immediately
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(Fireplace Ashes Cause Multiple Fires)

Fireplace ashes are to blame for three residential fires last weekend. The first occurred on Saturday at 3:40 pm at 4905 SW Watson Avenue in Beaverton when a bag of fireplace ashes was left in the home's living room. The ashes—still warm from a fire the previous day—burnt through the plastic bag, igniting the carpet and floor below and spreading into an interior wall. The fire caused approximately \$40,000 damage. On Sunday morning at 8:33 am and 10:49 am, firefighters responded to house fires at 1099 SW 215th Avenue and 2825 SW 123rd Avenue – both of which were deemed to have been caused by improperly disposed of fireplace ashes. Firefighters determined that the fire at 2825 SW 123rd Avenue stemmed from fireplace ashes (from a fire three days earlier) being placed into a recycling bin next to the home. The ashes smoldered and eventually ignited the recycling bin and spread to the exterior wall of the house.

Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue reminds individuals to use caution when disposing of fireplace ashes. If possible, allow ashes and coals to cool completely by waiting two to three days before cleaning out your fireplace or woodstove. If you cannot wait to clean out your fireplace or woodstove, place ashes outside in a metal container with a lid, away from your home and other combustibles.

Other tips when using a fireplace or woodstove:

- Have your fireplace or wood stove inspected for cracks and creosote, and cleaned if necessary. Creosote is a shiny, highly flammable material that can coat your chimney flue. When enough creosote is present, it only takes a spark to ignite and cause a chimney fire;
- Use only dry, seasoned wood to reduce creosote build-up;
- Install a tight-fitting fireplace screen and never leave your fire unattended;
- Keep combustible items such as magazines, newspapers, furniture at least 3 ft. away;
- Check your smoke alarms to ensure they are working in case of fire.

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