



NEWS RELEASE

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Release: Immediately
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(Fire Resulting from Improperly Disposed Chemicals Forces Evacuation of Three Tigard Businesses)

Around 5:30pm this evening, firefighters from Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue responded to reports of smoke smelling of chlorine behind the Value Village in Tigard (12060 Main Street). Firefighters from the Tigard, Progress, King City and Tualatin fire stations arrived within minutes and knocked down a fire that had started in a trash compactor behind the Value Village, Rite Aid and Woodcraft stores. Due to the amount of combustible materials in the trash compactor and bin, the fire continued to smolder for over an hour.

Fumes were drawn in through ventilation systems in all three of the buildings, so firefighters and police officers from Tigard Police Department evacuated all employees and customers to protect them from inhaling any of the dangerous smoke. The cause of the fire was soon discovered to be pool cleaning chemicals - including chlorine, bromine, and algacide - which had been thrown into the trash compactor by a Rite Aid employee. It's likely the chemicals generated heat and ignited other rubbish in the compactor.

Fortunately there were no injuries, but the Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue Hazardous Materials team remained on scene for several hours to ensure that the fumes were properly mitigated. The City of Tigard Public Works Department also brought in a backhoe to help break up the remaining compacted trash to ensure that the fire would not rekindle.

Chlorine, which is corrosive in liquid form, can be a respiratory irritant in gas form and can cause dizziness and nausea. Though chlorine can be found in many household cleaning products, it is imperative that it is disposed of properly.

Any unwanted hazardous household products such as bleach, pesticides, leftover paint, solvents and automotive fluids should be taken to one of Metro's hazardous waste facilities where they will recycle them or dispose of them safely. Call Metro at 503-234-3000 for the nearest disposal location or visit them on the web at <http://www.metro-region.org/index.cfm/go/by.web/id/571> .

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