



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **(Fire Investigator Deems Friday's Fire in Washington County Accidental)**

At 5:49 p.m. on Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, firefighters from Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue responded to reports of a fire at 4600 SW Southview Terrace in Washington County (near Aloha). The homeowner had been working around the house when he heard strange sounds coming from his middle bedroom, which was being used as an office/entertainment room. He discovered the fire and rushed to get water from the garage, which he used to try and extinguish the flames. By the time he returned with a second bucket of water, the fire had grown significantly and his hair was singed and his face was burned.

When firefighters arrived minutes later, the homeowner was outside the home and there was smoke showing. One team of firefighter paramedics treated the homeowner, while another aggressively attacked the fire. Within seven minutes of their arrival, firefighters had treated the homeowner and knocked down the fire. First-arriving firefighters also reported that a neighbor had used a garden hose to spray the fire from an outside window, which may have helped keep the fire from spreading. Paramedics from Metro West Ambulance continued caring for the homeowner while transporting him to Emanuel Hospital.

A fire investigator immediately began processing the scene to try and determine how the fire started. It was clear to him from burn patterns and physical evidence that the fire started underneath a desk and spread to nearby combustibles. From that evidence, it also appears that the fire was electrical in nature. After interviewing the homeowner from Emanuel Hospital just before he was released on Saturday, the fire investigator confirmed his suspicions. There were several computer and sound system chords all plugged into the same circuit, including a sub-woofer. This likely overloaded one of the appliance chords and caused the fire. Since the home's smoke alarm had been disabled, the family was fortunate that the fire occurred during the day, otherwise there could have been more significant injuries and damage.

This fire has served as a reminder of how important it is for people to get out and stay out of a burning building. Though the urge to retrieve items and try to extinguish a fire is strong, it can be deadly. If a fire is larger than what can be extinguished by a small fire extinguisher, it should be handled by firefighters who have protective clothing and breathing apparatus which protect them from toxic smoke and burning flames. It is also important to avoid using water near electrical items which can cause more damage and possible electric shock. For more tips on home fire escape planning and the importance of working smoke alarms, visit [www.tvfr.com](http://www.tvfr.com).

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