



## **NEWS RELEASE**

Date: July 12, 2008  
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Contact: Walt Peck, 503-441-9324 (pager)

### **(BBQ identified as source of Sterling Pointe Apartment Fire)**

Fire investigators with Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue have determined that a barbeque was the ignition source for last night's 2-alarm fire at the Sterling Pointe Apartments (14040 SW Teal, Beaverton). "After talking with witnesses and reviewing the physical evidence, it is clear that the BBQ was where it started; exactly why it happened is less clear," stated Investigator John Wolff. A tenant told Wolff that he had finished barbequing ten minutes before the fire started and had turned off the valves on the propane unit.

The fire was reported at 8:05 p.m. and the first-arriving crew from Station 66 was on scene within three minutes. They found two units of the four-plex in flames, with heavy fire coming from windows and doors. Because of the intensity of the flames and proximity of other apartments, a second alarm was called immediately. Fire fighters initiated an aggressive attack that quickly transitioned from the perimeter to interior, including a search for potential victims. Concerned that the fire would spread through the attic to the adjacent two units, fire fighters accessed the roof and used chainsaws to cut vent holes and get at flames in the attic. The fire was brought under control in approximately 20 minutes, but firefighters continued searching for and extinguishing flames in remote areas of the attic for another hour.

The fire started on the deck of the second floor unit and that apartment was heavily damaged. The speed of the response and tactics used by the firefighters resulted in far less damage in the first floor unit and very little fire or water damage to the adjacent units.

There were no injuries, though a cat succumbed in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-story apartment. Seven individuals occupied the two burned units and an additional seven were temporarily displaced from the adjacent units. The Red Cross responded and provided victims assistance.

Initial damage is estimated at \$150,000 to the building. No estimate of loss to personal contents is available at this time.

With the summer season in full swing, Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue reminds you to use caution when operating any type of barbeque grill:

1. When changing propane tanks, check the fittings for proper seal and fit.
2. Read the Owner's Manual prior to operating a gas grill.
3. Open the lid when lighting gas barbeque burners. Wait five minutes to allow the gas to clear if it does not light.

4. Use extra caution when cooking on a wood deck.
5. Always dispose of barbecue ashes in a covered metal container. Briquettes can remain hot for several days.
6. Follow all apartment complex rules regarding the types of grills allowed.
7. Never leave a barbecue unattended
8. Always have a hose, bucket of water or fire extinguisher nearby.
9. Never squirt charcoal lighter fluid on burning briquettes

For more information on fire and life safety tips, visit [www.tvfr.com](http://www.tvfr.com).



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