



NEWS RELEASE

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(Pets Perish and Family Escapes from Second Story of Tigard Home During Early Morning Fire)

Just after 8 a.m. this morning, firefighters from Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue responded to reports of a home on fire in the 8700 block of SW Spruce Street in Tigard. Firefighters from Tigard Station 51 arrived within four minutes to find heavy smoke and flames coming from most of the windows of the two-story home (8708 SW Spruce Street). Additional TVF&R units from Tigard, Beaverton, Tualatin and King City also responded to fight the fire.

First-arriving firefighters were met by the frightened family of six adults (*elder parents and their grown children and significant other*) and one infant who narrowly escaped from the burning home. At the time the fire was discovered, four of the adults and the infant were able to escape from the first floor of the home. The other two adults, however, were trapped on the second floor because of the heavy volume of fire consuming the first floor. With the help of a neighbor, the homeowner used a ladder to rescue both from a window.

Though the family and firefighters were uninjured as a result of this fire, four pets (two cats and two dogs) perished despite efforts of firefighter paramedics to resuscitate them with pet rescue kits.

Firefighters extinguished the bulk of the fire within twenty minutes, but they continued to work for over an hour to put out hot spots which stubbornly burned in wall voids and the attic space. Nearly all of the contents and the structure of the home were ravaged by the fire. Fortunately the family is insured and being assisted by nearby relatives.

Fire investigators have worked at the scene all day, conducting witness interviews, digging through burned debris, processing evidence and evaluating burn patterns. Though the investigation is not yet complete, they have narrowed their focus to a living room couch on the first floor where it appears the fire started. It is suspected that the most probable cause of the fire was an ember from the nearby wood stove. The elder homeowner had started a morning fire in the wood stove on the first floor and left the room. Not long after, the family was alerted by sounding smoke alarms.

“Without working smoke alarms and the quick action of the homeowner, this fire could have seriously injured or killed the two trapped adults,” stated Cassandra Ulven with Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue. “During this cold winter weather, we urge families to use caution with fireplaces, wood stoves and other home heating equipment. Make sure there is plenty of space near heat sources and consider having your fireplace, wood stove and chimney inspected by a professional.”

See following pages for photos of firefighters working and fire damage.

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