



NEWS RELEASE

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(Woman's Smoking While on Medical Oxygen Causes Mobile Home Fire)

At 3:07 pm today, Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue firefighters were called to a fire in a mobile home at 17112 SW Eldorado Drive in the Eldorado Mobile Home Park in King City. The first responding crew from Station 35 could see heavy smoke while still enroute. They arrived within three minutes of the call time to find heavy smoke and flames coming from the back bedroom of the mobile home and neighbors reporting that an elderly woman might still be inside. Firefighters made an aggressive fire attack, pulling hoselines through the front door. Battling heavy heat and smoke inside the older, metal-clad mobile home they made their way to the back of the home to extinguish the fire and search for the woman. Within five minutes the fire was extinguished and within 10 minutes firefighters confirmed there no occupants inside.

The 77 year-old female occupant told fire investigators that she is dependent upon a portable medical oxygen machine and was smoking a cigarette which came into contact with and melted her oxygen tubing. A small fire broke out on her bedding material and she went to get some water to put it out. When she returned, the fire had grown exponentially due to the free-flowing oxygen fueling the fire. She escaped her mobile home and went to a neighbor's house to call 9-1-1. The woman was treated on scene by firefighters but refused transport to the hospital by an ambulance. She was later driven to the hospital by a friend to be evaluated for her pre-existing respiratory issues.

The mobile home and contents were valued at approximately \$10,000 and believed to be a complete loss. The occupant had no fire insurance.

Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue officials believe that the occupant is extremely lucky to have escaped the fire. According to the National Fire Protection Association, from 2002-2005 oxygen administration equipment was involved in an estimated average of 182 home fires, resulting in an average of 46 civilian deaths and 60 civilian injuries. NFPA also reports that one-quarter every fire involving medical oxygen resulted in a fire death. TVF&R reminds individuals that oxygen is highly flammable and should be kept away from all open flames, including smoking materials.

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