



NEWS RELEASE

Date: March 16, 2009
Release Date: Immediately
Contact: Karen Eubanks, Public Information Officer, 503-441-9324 (pager)

(Smoke from a Smoldering Fire Threatens Sleeping Occupant)

On Saturday, March 14th, at 4:55 am, Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue units were dispatched to a possible structure fire at 12085 SW Sagehen Street in Beaverton after a neighbor called 9-1-1 reporting a smoke alarm sounding. Upon arrival, Engine 66 found light gray smoke coming from the front door of a 3-story condominium. Firefighters entered the home and found moderate smoke throughout the structure. They located a fire in a sofa/recliner in the living room on the second floor of the home, and extinguished it using a water extinguisher. Firefighters searching the unit, found a male occupant in bed on the 3rd floor. He was assisted out of the condominium and treated for smoke inhalation by TVFR paramedics. As a precaution he was transported to Providence St. Vincent Medical Center for further evaluation.

Firefighters removed the sofa from the condominium to ensure any smoldering remnants were completely extinguished. Damage to the sofa and surrounding carpet is estimated at \$8,500.

A fire investigator determined that the most probable cause of the fire was a smoldering cigarette that had fallen into—and eventually ignited—the sofa cushions. TVF&R reminds individuals of the following facts:

- Cigarettes are the leading cause of fatal fires in the U.S., killing between 700-900 smokers—and nonsmokers—each year.
- The risk of dying in a home structure fire caused by smoking materials rises with age. Between 2003 and 2006, approximately 36% of fatal smoking-material fire victims were age 65 or older.
- Forty (40) percent of fatal home smoking-material fire victims were sleeping when injured; thirty-four percent were attempting to escape, to fight the fire, or to rescue others.
- Mattresses and bedding, upholstered furniture, and trash are the items most commonly ignited in smoking-material home fires.

###