



NEWS RELEASE

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Clothes Dryer or Fire Hazard? It's Up to You.

A clothes dryer clogged with lint almost caused a significant house fire Sunday morning in Tualatin. A quick thinking resident who was home at the time and a speedy response by TVF&R firefighters kept the flames from spreading to the rest of the structure.

The fire is a good reminder for everyone to regularly clean their dryers. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, there are an estimated 15,500 fires started by clothes dryers each year. Many of these fires might have been prevented with proper maintenance and venting.

Sunday's fire, which happened on Arapaho Road in Tualatin, was discovered by a homeowner when she smelled something burning. She checked her dryer, which was running, and discovered no smoke or flames. A short time later as the burning smell continued, she returned to her laundry room to discover flames coming from beneath the gas dryer and immediately called 9-1-1. Firefighters from TVF&R's Station 56 and Station 34 arrived within 5 minutes and quickly extinguished the flames. Although some of the laundry room suffered damage from smoke and flames, firefighters were able to keep it from spreading further.

A TVF&R fire investigator was able to determine that the fire was caused by excessive build up of lint, dust and other debris in the natural gas heated dryer.

"Dryer fires are very common and, frequently, preventable," says TVF&R Communications Officer Brian Barker, "this is a good reminder for everyone to check for lint buildup in your clothes dryer."

Most clothes dryer fires can be prevented by following these safety tips:

- Never run your clothes dryer while away from your home or asleep.
- Remove lint from the traps, vents and surrounding areas of the dryer after each load of laundry.
- Avoid drying items made of plastic, foam or other synthetic materials.
- If your clothes are suddenly taking a long time to dry or clothes feel hotter than usual at the end of a cycle, your dryer may be telling you there's a problem. Look for a blockage in your dryer system.

"Frequently, homeowners toss their clothes in a dryer and leave," says TVF&R's Brian Barker, "in this case, if the resident hadn't been home at the time of the fire, the flames could have spread to the entire structure."

