



NEWS RELEASE

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Space Heater Caused Fatal Aloha Fire

A space heater placed too close to a bed caused today's fatal house fire in Aloha. Despite a fast response from the firefighters who located and rescued 47 year old Brenda Ann Mocaer, she died after being rushed to Providence St. Vincent Hospital.

"Our hearts and thoughts are with Ms. Mocaer's family," says TVF&R Public Information Officer Brian Barker, "our firefighters got to the home within minutes, quickly searched for and located her and rushed her to an ambulance. Unfortunately, she had been exposed to a lot of smoke in a short period of time."

Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue Deputy Fire Marshal Ed Bonollo and a team of investigators carefully examined the room where the fire started and determined that a space heater ignited the fire. The space heater had been placed too close to a mattress and bedding. The fire was confined to a bedroom and a connected bathroom. Ms. Mocaer was located in the bathroom. Investigators are still working to determine whether a working smoke alarm was in the bedroom.

"We'd like to remind everyone that space heaters need space," Barker says, "many portable heaters have exposed surfaces that become very hot and can ignite combustibles." To ensure your safety keep portable heaters at least three feet away from items that can burn. In addition, ensure that your portable heater has a tip-over switch (automatically shuts-off if knocked over) and turn off all heaters before leaving the house or going to bed. For maximum protection in case of fire, maintain working smoke alarms throughout your home and having a home fire escape plan.

"Smoke is incredibly dangerous," says TVF&R's Brian Barker, "dark and deadly smoke can fill your home in minutes and one 'breath' can confuse you to the point that you never make it out alive. This is why firefighters wear air packs when entering a burning building and use thermal imagers to 'see' in smoke-filled buildings."

Background on the fire:

A neighbor called 911 at 9:44 Saturday morning reporting smoke and flames coming from a two story home located at 1756 SW Harvey Way in Aloha. Firefighters aboard TVF&R's Squirt 62 arrived in less than five minutes. Firefighters immediately encountered an off-duty Portland firefighter who notified them that a resident had reported that someone was still inside the house on the second floor. The TVF&R firefighters from Aloha pulled a hose-line from Squirt 62 and entered the home to perform a rescue. They quickly located Ms. Mocaer on the second floor of the home, removed her from danger, and placed her in a waiting ambulance. She was suffering from smoke inhalation and was transported by Metro West ambulance to Providence St. Vincent Hospital.