



NEWS RELEASE

Date: April 19th, 2011
Release Date: Immediately
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Another Fire Caused by Cigarettes in Tigard

Firefighters from Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue responded to another fire caused by improperly disposed cigarettes in Tigard Sunday evening. Firefighters from TVF&R's Tigard Station 51 were dispatched to 12505 SW North Dakota Street in Tigard at 7:42 p.m. after someone called 911 reporting an apartment balcony on fire.

Firefighters arrived to find that a passerby had knocked down a fire on an apartment balcony. Firefighters worked to ensure that the fire was completely out.

A TVF&R investigator has determined that the fire was caused by a lit cigarette tossed into a plastic trash container that was being used as an ashtray. The occupants told the investigator that they regularly threw cigarettes and combustible trash into the trash container.

The container caught fire and flames quickly spread to the apartment building's siding.

"Never use anything that can burn or melt as an ashtray," says TVF&R Public Information Officer Brian Barker, "that means that you should not use plastic trash containers, plastic coffee cans, or planters filled with potting soil. Potting soil or bark chips can easily catch fire."

The fire caused \$10,000 in damage to the exterior of the apartment building.

Sunday's fire is the 6th structure fire caused by improper disposal of cigarette butts in 3 months. The following recent fires were caused by cigarettes:

1. April 17th, 2011 – A cigarette tossed in a plastic trash container causes a fire on an apartment balcony in Tigard at 12505 SW North Dakota Street.
2. March 27th, 2011 – An improperly disposed of cigarette ignited bark dust outside the Wanker's Country Store at 19995 Stafford Road.
3. March 10th, 2011 – An ashtray made from a plastic coffee can ignited on an apartment complex balcony at 2325 NW Schmidt Way in Washington County, causing \$400,000 in damage and displaced several families.
4. February 25th, 2011 – A cigarette caused a fire when a plastic planter used as an ashtray on a apartment complex balcony in Tualatin at 18540 SW Boones Ferry Road.
5. February 20th, 2011 – A cigarette caused a tragic fire that killed a woman in Tigard's Summerfield Community.
6. January 19th, 2011 – A cigarette ignited a planter filled with potting soil at 9301 SW Sagert Street in Tualatin. Flames spread to an apartment, causing \$155,000 in damage.