



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Public Information Officer, 503-441-9324 (pager)

Barbecue Causes West Linn Fire

A fire in a barbecue caused a fast moving house fire in West Linn Wednesday night. A resident of the home at 17725 Hillside Drive called 911 at 8:07 p.m. reporting that his barbecue grill was on fire. Within minutes, he reported that the fire had spread to the side of his home.

Firefighters from TVF&R's Bolton Station 58 arrived several minutes later to find the occupants of the home evacuated and black smoke rising from the back deck of the three story house. As additional firefighters from nearby fire stations in West Linn, Lake Oswego and Oregon City responded to the scene, firefighters quickly determined that the flames had raced up the side of the home and were burning in the attic. Firefighters worked quickly to extinguish flames on the home's back deck and inside the structure as firefighters from Clackamas Fire District's Truck 15 climbed a ladder to the home's roof and cut ventilation holes to access the seat of the fire. The fire was under control within 30 minutes.

22 firefighters from Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue, Lake Oswego Fire and Clackamas Fire District responded to the fire.

A TVF&R investigator has determined that the fire originated in a barbecue grill on the home's back deck. The barbecue was located less than a foot from the side of the home, so flames easily ignited the siding and were able to extend into the attic.

"Gas barbecues are not inherently dangerous, but anytime you work with fire, there are risks," says Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue Public Information Officer Brian Barker, "we recommend that you place your gas grill well away from the side of your home. If you have a back yard, roll it out into the back yard before you use it. Do not use your grill close to the side of your home or under the eaves of a structure because the flames can spread very quickly."

Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue also reminds barbecue owners to check your grill and tank for leaks after replacing your propane tank. Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose and connection to the grill. A propane leak will release bubbles. If your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off the gas tank and grill and contact a professional for service. Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year and whenever you change bottles.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 7,700 home fires caused by grills or barbecues each year between 2004 and 2008, including an average of 3,200 structure fires and 4,500 outside fires. These 7,700 fires caused an annual average of 13 civilian deaths, 120 reported injuries, and \$70 million in direct property damage.

Gas grills were involved in an average of 6,200 of those fires each year and a leak or break in a propane line or tank was the leading factor contributing to gas grill fires.



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