



NEWS RELEASE

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

Tualatin Apartment Fire Caused by Cigarette

A Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue fire investigator has determined that this morning's apartment fire in Tualatin was caused by a discarded cigarette butt.

The smoking materials had been disposed of in a plastic container filled with potting soil on the apartment's rear patio. The organic material ignited and extended to the exterior siding of the apartment building and the flames quickly extended to the building's second floor.

TVF&R reminds the public that careless smoking or the improper disposal of smoking materials is the number one cause of fire fatalities in the United States. If you're a smoker, make sure butts or ashes are out before you throw them away. Dowsing them in water or sand is the best way to do that. Dispose of smoking materials in a non-flammable container.

BACKGROUND:

An early morning fire gutted one apartment unit and damaged another in Tualatin early this morning. Firefighters from Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue quickly responded and prevented the fire from spreading to neighboring apartments.

A resident called 9-1-1 at 6:06 a.m. reporting flames and smoke coming from the rear of a two story apartment building at the Tualatin Heights Apartments located at 9301 SW Sagert in Tualatin. Firefighters from Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue's Station 34 arrived within five minutes to find the rear of the building heavily involved with smoke and flames belching from the first and second floor units. Firefighters from Squirt 34 first determined that the building had been evacuated and that no-one was in either of the involved units, then began attacking the flames. As additional crews arrived at the scene firefighters controlled the fire within fifteen minutes. No-one was injured and the occupants of two apartment units are displaced.

"Whenever you have a fire in an apartment building, there's a concern it will spread to other units," says TVF&R Public Information Officer Brian Barker, "although two units were involved before we arrived at the scene, a quick response by our firefighters was able to prevent it from spreading to the rest of the building."

Five fire engines, two fire trucks, a rehab unit, and one battalion chief responded to the fire with a total of 33 firefighters.