



**THE CITY OF REDMOND  
FIRE DEPARTMENT**

8450 - 161<sup>st</sup> Avenue N.E.  
Redmond, Washington 98052-3848

## Press Release

For more information, call:

For Release 10:57 p.m.  
June 8, 2005

Lt. Thomas Langton  
Public Information Officer  
Redmond Fire Department  
Office: (425) 556-2225  
Cell: (425) 444-2354  
tlangton@redmond.gov

---

### **Fire Sprinklers save Redmond housing project again**

---

The fire sprinkler system installed at a Redmond housing project activated tonight extinguishing a bedroom fire, protecting residents, and significantly limiting damage to the residence, adjacent units, and the complex. This is the second sprinkler save at this complex in just four months.

At 9:05 p.m. on Wednesday, June 8, 2005, the Eastside Communications Center received a call from an occupant on the third floor reporting a mattress on fire inside his apartment. Dispatchers heard the fire alarm sounding in the background and advised him to evacuate the building. Two minutes later the fire alarm company called to reporting the multiple activations of the building fire alarm system at The Village at Overlake Station, a 308 unit, King County Housing Authority, multi-family project located in the 2500 block of 152 AVE NE, in Redmond's Overlake neighborhood. The alarm company operator advised the alarm system was indicating water flowing from the sprinkler system. This housing project consists of three large four or five story residential buildings atop a two story parking garage, one level of which serves as a Park and Ride lot. A multi-family structure fire response was dispatched.

The resident advised he had been smoking in bed prior to falling asleep. He was awakened, possibly by the local smoke detector in the bedroom, and found the mattresses and bedding on fire in the bedroom. He exited the bedroom closing the door behind, which confined the fire to the bedroom of origin. A single, fire sprinkler activated in the bedroom containing the fire until firefighters arrived. The activation of the sprinkler head caused the building fire alarm to sound as the resident was calling 911.

Two fire engines, a ladder truck, an aid car, a Battalion Chief, and a paramedic supervisor from the Redmond Fire Department and two fire engines, and a ladder truck from the Bellevue Fire Department were dispatched. Firefighters arrived to find the building evacuated with light smoke in the third floor hallway. They entered the apartment of origin and found smoke to the floor in one bedroom. Fire fighters determined the fire was controlled by the fire sprinkler system. They utilized a 1-3/4" hoseline to enter the unit and confirm extinguishment. Fire damage was contained to the mattresses, carpeting, and a scorched wall in the bedroom of origin. Smoke damage was confined to the bedroom. Moderate water damage occurred in the unit of origin on the third floor, and minor water damage in two, second floor units and one, first floor unit.

---

Prior to fire department personnel leaving the premises, onsite management personnel had a restoration company removing the water from the carpeting and a sprinkler technician had restored the fire sprinkler system to operation. Fire Investigators have determined the fire to be accidental- the result of smoking in bed. The preliminary loss estimate for damage to the unit and contents, and water damage in the lower units is \$3,100.00. This is significantly less than the damage resulting from a typical bedroom fire that must be extinguished by fire fighters using only fire hoses. The unit of origin will be uninhabitable for a minimum of one night to permit necessary minor repairs. No other residents of the 308 apartments in the complex were displaced as a result of this incident. No civilians or fire fighters were injured. No adjacent living units were damaged by smoke or flame.

Fire codes in Redmond require the installation of fire sprinklers in all large, multi-family, residential buildings. This incident points to the value of fire sprinklers in protecting residents and limiting damage from hostile fires. The outcome of this evening's incident would have been significantly different, had this structure not been equipped with fire sprinklers. Fire doubles in size every 30 seconds and can quickly consume entire rooms or buildings. Lacking sprinklers and prompt notification from both the resident and the alarm monitoring company, today's fire would have threatened the entire structure and hundreds of residents. This is the second save by fire sprinklers at this complex in four months. The first occurred on February 20, 2005 when an unattended candle in a bathroom fell and ignited nearby combustibles. Damage in that instance was limited to \$1,100.00. The February fire was confined to the room of origin and was limited to scorched paint on the bathroom wall, a burned wicker garbage can, and wet carpeting. Only one resident was displaced while wet carpeting was dried. No adjacent units were affected. In both instances lives and property were protected by the presence of fire sprinklers.

---

The Redmond Fire Department urges you to review the following information:

- Smoking is the leading cause of mattress and bedding fires annually in the United States.
- Smoking is the leading cause of residential fire deaths. *Do not* smoke in bed or when drowsy.
- 94% of fatal structure fires occur in residences. Most between midnight and 5:00 a.m.
- Check to be sure you are protected by **working smoke detectors**. Test monthly, change batteries annually.
- Remember **Fire Sprinklers SAVE LIVES**, install them wherever possible.

---

###

---