



# **City of Madison Fire Department**

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## ***News Release***

**Date:** January 21, 2009

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### **Heat From Torches Caused Recent Fires**

City of Madison fire investigators have determined that the heat from torches caused two recent structure fires.

A fire at 321 Walnut Street on January 15 started when a maintenance worker was using a torch to thaw frozen pipes in the building. The torch's flame ignited insulation in a wall near the pipes. All residents of the five-unit apartment building escaped without injury, but the fire caused an estimated \$50,000 damage to the building and contents.

Yesterday's fire at 2750 East Johnson Street resulted from a torch that was being used for some plumbing work in the building. The heat of the torch traveled through a pipe and ignited the nearby wall. The fire spread up the wall and into the attic. This fire caused \$200,000 damage to the store and three apartments located in the building. No injuries were reported.

The following precautions are recommended for anyone using a welder, torch, or any equipment that produces a flame or sparks:

- Remove all combustible or flammable items from the work area including construction debris, flammable liquids, flammable vapors, dust, and lint.
- If fire hazards cannot be removed, use adequate shielding to prevent sparks, slag, and heat from igniting the fire hazards.
- Openings or cracks in walls, floors, ducts, or shafts shall be covered to prevent passage of sparks and slag.
- Keep a fire extinguisher nearby while working.
- Provide a fire watch while performing the work and for at least 30 minutes after completion.

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