



# **City of Madison Fire Department**

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## ***News Release***

**Date:** May 31, 2009

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### **Bathroom Fire Causes \$5,000 Damage**

An early morning fire caused approximately \$5,000 damage to an apartment at 7634 Radcliffe Drive on Sunday. Nobody was in the apartment at the time of the fire and no injuries were reported.

The fire was discovered when a neighbor heard the smoke alarm sounding in the hallway of the building. He called maintenance personnel who responded to check the alarm. When the maintenance technician opened the door of the apartment he noticed smoke coming out around the door. A call was made to 9-1-1 and firefighters were dispatched at 1:22 AM.

Ladder 2 arrived within five minutes and began firefighting operations. They entered the apartment with a hoseline and discovered the fire in the bathroom. The fire was quickly extinguished and the apartment was searched for any victims who might be inside. Another crew ventilated smoke from the apartment and checked for any fire spread to other areas of the apartment.

Fire investigators determined that the fire started in the bathroom vent fan and the cause appears to be accidental. During the investigation, fire crews noticed that the smoke alarm in the apartment had been disconnected. This likely resulted in a delayed alarm and more smoke damage to the apartment.

Firefighters remind everyone of these safety tips:

- Bathroom vent fans should be cleaned regularly. Dust and lint buildup in the fan can cause the motor to overheat. Refer to manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and operating steps.
- Turn off the vent fan as soon as the area is ventilated. Long-term use may cause overheating.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of the home and in each sleeping area. Interconnected smoke alarms will make sure the alarm is heard throughout the home.
- Test your smoke alarms every month.
- Do not tamper with or disable smoke alarms. These are life saving devices that must be functional at all times.
- Have a home escape plan and practice it twice a year.
- When the alarm sounds, get out and stay out. After you have escaped, call 9-1-1 from a safe place.
- Never go back inside the building for any reason.
- Install and maintain carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning.

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