Candle Blamed for West Linn House Fire

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Portland - Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue (TVF&R) fire investigators say an unattended candle was the most likely cause of a Saturday afternoon fire that damaged a West Linn home. The fire was reported to 9-1-1 dispatchers shortly after 3 pm. Neighbors reported seeing smoke coming from the house at 1405 SW Rosemarie Drive. When firefighters from TVF&R's Bolton Fire Station #58 arrived, they found fire and smoke coming from a second-story bedroom window. They mounted an aggressive interior attack and brought the flames under control in about thirteen minutes. Twenty firefighters from three TVF&R stations, one Lake Oswego Fire engine and one Clackamas County Fire District #1 truck battled the blaze. Investigators say the most likely cause of the fire was a candle left burning in a bedroom used as an office. The candle was atop a desk. The investigators place the damage estimate at $25,000 and credit the family's practice of keeping interior doors closed with preventing additional fire and smoke damage. "This was a tragedy that was narrowly averted," stated Deputy Fire Marshall John Wolff, the fire investigator. "The home's only smoke alarm had been disconnected due to numerous false activations from cooking," Wolff said. He added that the 90-year old woman napping inside was lucky to be alive and made it out unharmed only because she awoke in time to flee along with the family's dogs. The husband, wife and adult daughter who lived there were not at home at the time. Their insurance company has provided the family with temporary lodging. The home was not equipped with residential sprinklers, which provide the maximum home fire safety especially for families with children, the elderly, and those with mobility impairments.