



NEWS RELEASE

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(Hillsboro Fire Displaces Family of Six)

A one-alarm house fire forced a Hillsboro family of six from their home early Tuesday morning and fire investigators say the family is lucky to be alive because there was no working smoke alarm in the residence. The fire was reported to 9-1-1 dispatchers at 2:47 am at 1943 Jean Lane. When the first arriving company of Hillsboro firefighters arrived from the Brookwood Station #2, they found light to moderate smoke about 2 feet from the ceiling with fire in the master bathroom of the three-bedroom ranch-style home. Firefighters quickly knocked down the flames and began clearing the smoke from the home.

The home is owned by 46-year old Thomas Rojas, Sr. His son, 24-year old Thomas Rojas, Jr. awoke to find smoke in the home. He woke his wife Diana, 22, their two children, Kevin, 4, and Crystal, 2, a brother, Daniel, 16, and Mr. Rojas Sr. All escaped unharmed. Thomas Jr. obtained a garden hose and attempted to fight the fire through the bathroom window. He managed to keep the fire in check until firefighters arrived.

Fire investigators say the most likely cause of the fire was a faulty exhaust fan in the master bathroom. Damage is estimated at \$40,000. The fire caused extensive damage to the master bathroom. Heat and smoke damaged the master bedroom. There was light smoke damage in the remainder of the home. The Rojas family will be staying with relatives while their home undergoes repair.

The younger Rojas told investigators that the smoke alarm had been chirping, indicating it needed a new battery. The family had removed the home's only smoke alarm from the ceiling with the intention of getting a replacement battery. National statistics indicate that in three of every four fatal house fires the smoke alarm is missing, disabled, or has a dead battery. Hillsboro Fire Department reminds you that a working smoke alarm is the single most important safety device in your home:

- Check your alarms monthly to ensure they are working. Never go to bed without working smoke alarms in your home.
- Create a written fire escape plan, mapping out two ways out of every room in your home.
- Select a meeting place out front where every can assemble.
- Make sure you call 9-1-1 after exiting the home.
- And, once out, stay out! Never go back into a burning house.

For more fire and life safety information, visit: www.ci.hillsboro.or.us/fire or call 503-681-6166.

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Photo Caption: Marble 6505.jpg

Hillsboro Fire Inspector Charlie Marble photographs the bathroom exhaust fan that is believed to be the source of a house fire that forced a family of six to flee their home early Tuesday.