



CITY OF HARRISONBURG  
**FIRE**  
**DEPARTMENT**

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## Weekend fire prompts guidance from HFD

HARRISONBURG, Va. – An early morning fire sent a family of seven into the cold on Saturday morning, reminding local residents once again of the importance of having working smoke alarms.

Harrisonburg firefighters were called to the 500 block of Allegheny Avenue at 5:30 a.m. on Dec. 26 for a reported structure fire with flames coming from the roof. First arriving units confirmed an active fire in the residence, which has been determined to have originated from the chimney.

The home's occupants were able to escape after their pet initially alerted them to a problem and a neighbor banged on their door after he saw fire in the attic. The home did not have working smoke alarms, and the quick actions of a neighbor helped avert a tragedy.



*(Above) The fire on Allegheny Avenue originated in the chimney.*

In the wake of the fire, the Harrisonburg Fire Department has several important messages for the community. First, functioning smoke alarms are critical in alerting occupants and giving them the time necessary to escape. Second, chimney fires are a frequent source of fire in the home, causing 25,000 fires annually resulting in \$125 million in property damage.

To prevent chimney fires, occupants should:

- Have your chimney or fireplace inspected at least annually by a trained professional, and more frequently based on use.
- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from your fireplace or wood stove.
- Make sure that your chimney is constructed to avoid transferring heat into combustible structural members.

Firefighters were able to bring the fire under control in about 30 minutes. The cause of the fire has been determined to be accidental, originating as a chimney fire, with damage estimates set at approximately \$60,000. There were no civilian or firefighter injuries despite operating in temperatures that hovered in the teens.

The Harrisonburg Fire Department was assisted by Rockingham County Fire Rescue, the Harrisonburg Rescue Squad, Harrisonburg Police Department and Harrisonburg Electric Cooperative.

***The Harrisonburg Fire Department*** is an ISO-Class II All-Hazards agency providing essential emergency and non-emergency life safety services to the public who live, work and travel in Harrisonburg. More information about the Fire Department is available on-line at [www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire) or on Facebook®, Twitter® and Instagram®.

***The City of Harrisonburg*** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 54,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).



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