



CITY OF HARRISONBURG
FIRE
DEPARTMENT

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Firefighters rescue woman from Deer Run Apartments fire

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Harrisonburg Fire Department firefighters rescued a woman Friday afternoon after she was unable to evacuate when a Deer Run Apartments unit caught fire in the 800 block of Port Republic Road.

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Emergency Communications Center, which received the 9-1-1 call at approximately 2:15 p.m., informed HFD crews while enroute that the woman was unable to escape on her own due to disabilities. Upon arrival, crews found smoke coming from a main level apartment with fire evident just inside the doorway. Firefighters from Tower 1 pushed past the fire, found the woman, and removed her while other crews placed an attack line in service to extinguish the fire.

The woman, and another occupant, were transferred to the care of the Harrisonburg Rescue Squad who transported both to the hospital for further evaluation. Both were considered in serious, but non-life-threatening, condition at the time. The Red Cross is assisting those impacted.

“I am tremendously proud of the women and men who effected this rescue and quickly controlled the fire,” Harrisonburg Fire Chief Matthew Tobia said. “The outcome of this incident could have been dramatically and tragically different were it not for the combined efforts of the 9-1-1 dispatchers, response personnel, and EMS working together to save lives.”

The cause of the fire is under investigation. There were functioning smoke alarms in the apartment. One factor in this incident is that firefighters found hoarding conditions inside the apartment, complicating the rescue effort. Such conditions pose a serious threat to potential victims and responders.

“We understand that many people may be challenged by a desire to retain large volumes of materials in their living space, but we strongly encourage apartment managers to speak with their tenants about how such conditions not only could impeded their ability to escape a fire, but how they could also cause dangers to other tenants in adjacent apartments,” Tobia said.

A total of 17 firefighters operated on the scene. HFD was assisted by Rockingham County Fire Rescue, Harrisonburg Rescue Squad and Harrisonburg Police Department. Harrisonburg Electric Commission and a building inspector from the City were also called to the scene. No firefighters were injured.

*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 or on Facebook®, Twitter® and Instagram®.*

*The **City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to 51,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.*

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