



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

101 NORTH MAIN STREET  
HARRISONBURG, VA 22802  
OFFICE (540) 432-7703

For Immediate Release: Feb. 27, 2026

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## **Individual killed in late-night Devon Lane apartment fire**

HARRISONBURG, Va. – A 28-year-old Harrisonburg community member is dead following an accidental cooking fire in their apartment late Thursday night.

The Harrisonburg Fire Department was dispatched to the 1400 block of Devon Lane at midnight for a report of smoke in an apartment building. The caller told 9-1-1 dispatchers that he believed there was a fire in the apartment below his, with smoke coming through the floor vents. Upon arrival, firefighters found a large volume of smoke coming from a ground-level apartment on the back of the building. Personnel had to force entry into the apartment where they found smoke throughout and fire in the kitchen area.

During the process of extinguishment, crews searched for and located an adult male unconscious inside the residence and immediately removed him. He was found to be in cardiac arrest with no pulse and was not breathing. HFD paramedics, working with the Harrisonburg Rescue Squad, attempted life saving measures. The individual was transported to Sentara RMH where he was declared dead at approximately 1 a.m. No additional identifiable information about the individual will be released at this time.

“Our department is heartbroken,” Fire Chief Matthew Tobia said. “We extend our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of this young man who had his entire life ahead of him. I am grateful to everyone who did all they could to try to save his life, and my heart goes out to all in our community who are suffering from this loss.”

The HFD Fire Marshal’s Office has determined the fire to be accidental with the origin and cause the result of cooking, which is the leading cause of all residential fires in the United States. The fire was extinguished in under 10 minutes with less than 50 gallons of water. Damage estimates have been set at approximately \$25,000. The Harrisonburg Fire Department was assisted at the scene by the Harrisonburg Police Department, Harrisonburg Rescue Squad and Rockingham County Fire Rescue. The last unit cleared the scene at approximately 3:45 a.m.

Working smoke alarms reduce the chance of dying in a fire by 50 to 60 percent, but they alone are not enough. In this incident, the apartment did have working smoke alarms. A 2024 report on Fire Loss in the United States by the National Fire Protection Association found that although the incidence of residential structure fires has decreased by 58 percent since 1980, the incidence of fire deaths has actually increased by 44 percent in the same timeframe, with one person dying in every 100 residential structure fires in the United States per year. Nearly 3,000 people died in residential structure fires in 2024, or one person every three hours.

Harrisonburg community members can contact HFD for a free home fire safety evaluation by calling (540) 432-7703 during business hours. HFD firefighters are available to install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms for free to anyone in the city and can be contacted via phone, social media or by visiting any City fire station. Learn more about cooking safety at [NFPA's website](#).

**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<sup>®</sup> and Instagram<sup>®</sup>.

**The City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 56,879 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).

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