



# City of Madison Fire Department

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## News Release

**Date:** February 2, 2010

**Released By:** Bernadette Galvez – Public Information Officer  
(608) 261-9844 or (608) 279-7168

### Children Safe After Van Fills with Smoke

On Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 5:30 pm, Former Firefighter Paramedic Paul Elvord pulled two young children from a van, after it started to fill with smoke. Fire investigators believe the fire started as the result of an electrical malfunction in the interior lighting. The fire ignited curtains, pillows, bench seat and captains chair while the children were inside.

Elvord was at the McDonald's on Park Street when he was alerted by someone who screamed that a van was on fire in the parking lot. Elvord instructed a bystander to call 911, grabbed a fire extinguisher and ran outside. He noticed the children huddled in the front of the conversion van, and saw fire towards the back of the van. Elvord pulled the children from the van and put the fire out prior to the arrival of Ladder 6 and Medic 6.

The children were evaluated by Medic 6 for smoke inhalation, but not transported.

At the time of the fire, the children were left unattended but the van was not running. The van filled with toxic smoke from the materials that were burning inside, including polyurethane foam. Children are particularly susceptible to these toxic fumes. Investigators at the scene say Elvord's quick actions kept the children from harm, and likely saved their lives.

#### ***Safe Kids remind residents of the following:***

##### **Tips**

- If you see an unattended child in a vehicle, call 911 immediately.
- Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle, even with the window slightly open.
- Place something that you'll need at your next stop - for example a purse, lunch, gym bag or briefcase - on the floor of the backseat where the child is sitting. This simple act could help prevent you from accidentally forgetting a child.
- Teach children not to play in, on or around vehicles.
- Always lock a vehicle's doors and trunk - especially at home. Keep keys and remote entry devices out of children's reach.
- Watch children closely around vehicles, particularly when loading and unloading. Check to ensure all children leave the vehicle when you reach your destination. Don't overlook sleeping infants.
- Be especially careful if you change your routine for dropping off infants or children at day care. Have a plan that if your child is late for daycare that you will be called within a few minutes.