



## Ember from Hobokenite's cigarette likely cause of "biggest fire" Madison Street resident has ever seen



By [Anthony J. Machcinski/The Jersey Journal](#)

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HOBOKEN An ember from a cigarette is probably responsible for Sunday's four-alarm blaze on Madison Street that displaced three residents, a fire official said yesterday.

The fire started around 2:30 p.m. on the second floor of 72 Madison St., a two-story, three-unit building between Observer Highway and First Street, Hoboken Fire Chief Richard Blohm said.

The fire, which reached four alarms, engulfed both 72 Madison St. and the 3-story building next door, 74 Madison St., and caused the evacuation of several homes in the area due to heavy smoke.

A resident at 72 Madison said he was smoking on the second-floor rear deck of his home when an ember fell, Blohm said.

Apparently blown inside the man's house by the wind, the resident told fire officials when he went inside his couch was up in flames.

At some point after the fire started, a propane tank on a barbecue grill on the deck blew up, Blohm said. Several residents reported hearing a loud explosion Sunday.

According to city spokesman Juan Melli, both 72 and 74 Madison St. are 3-unit buildings, but 74 Madison has been unoccupied since Hurricane Sandy.

Three residents at 72 Madison were displaced, officials said, noting the ground-floor unit at that building has also been unoccupied since Sandy.

One firefighter was treated at the scene for minor smoke inhalation, officials said.

The fire was declared under control around 4:10 p.m.

"Absolutely this is the biggest fire I've seen," Zach Farnsworth, a resident at 80 Madison, said Sunday. "I've never

seen anything this big. When you looked outside, you just saw a lot of smoke pouring out of the building.”

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