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Protect Your Family From Fire
Fire Prevention Week
October 9 - 15



Home Fires

One home structure fire is reported every 87 seconds in the United States.

On average, seven people die in home fires every day across America. Adults 65 and over face the highest risk of fire death.

In 2009, U.S. Fire Departments responded to 362,500 home structure fires. These fires caused 12,650 injuries, 2,565 deaths, and \$7.6 billion in direct damage.

Smoke Alarms

Approximately two-thirds of home deaths occur in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. About one in five smoke alarm failures were due to dead batteries.

Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in home fires in half.

Cooking

Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home structure fires and the third leading cause of home fire deaths.

Emergency
Dial 9-1-1



Remain calm. Give location, name and type of emergency clearly. Always let the telecommunicator hang up first.

Non-Emergency.....277-3500
 Administrative.....397-1995

July 28 - Occupants noticed a hallway light flickering. Upon investigating, they discovered smoke in the attic and immediately called 9-1-1.

The fire was caused by a fault in the electrical wiring located on top of a wall plate. The wiring ignited the wood framing which smoldered — perhaps for several hours. Attic insulation limited the amount of oxygen available to a sustained combustion. Firefighters using a thermal imaging camera quickly located the exact location of the fire and were able to quickly extinguish the fire with limited property or content damage. The home was built about 1961 and the wiring appears to be original to the structure.



Many of the electrical appliances and devices used in a home today were not found in older homes, thus electrical systems were pretty basic and were not designed to carry the loads. Over time, wiring and electrical devices (switches & receptacles) have suffered from overloading or fatigue. If you live in an older home, it would be highly recommended to have a licensed electrician inspect the electrical system. It may be time for the addition of more circuits.



May 6 - An electrical fault ignited a dishwasher. The fire extended to the upper wall cabinets. The fire melted a plastic water line that supplied the dishwasher, extinguishing most of the fire. Despite the limited fire spread, heat and smoke damage to the condominium unit was extensive. Workers were still repairing the damage in mid-September.

The condominium was not occupied. The occupants of an adjoining unit heard “crashing” noises, investigated, discovered the fire and called 9-1-1.

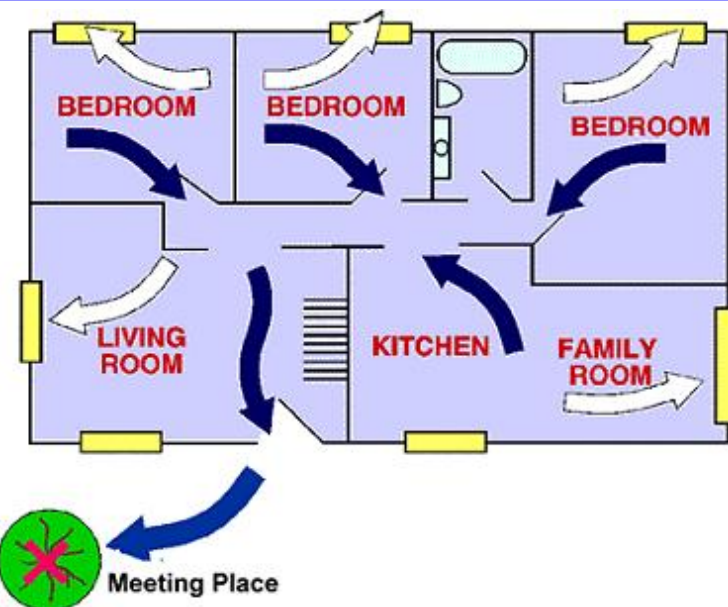
The smoke detector in the unit *was not* operational. It is highly probable that a working smoke detector would have alerted neighbors much sooner. Fires that go unchecked can double in volume every minute. A working smoke detector most likely would have made a significant difference with this incident. Fires not only displace occupants, they also destroy family memories.



May 26 - Firefighters work quickly to extinguish a fire in an unoccupied home. Neighbors reported that juveniles had been “hanging out” near the home. The Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal assisted with the investigation of this fire. The cause of the fire remains unknown.

Citizens should be alert of suspicious activities in and around unoccupied homes and buildings. Report any unusual circumstances to the St. Clair County Sheriff’s office - **9-1-1**.

Unoccupied homes that are neglected should be reported to St. Clair County Zoning officials @ 277-6600.



In the event of a fire, remember - time is the biggest enemy and every second counts!

Escape plans help you get out of your home quickly. In less than 30 seconds a small flame can get completely out of control and turn into a major fire. It only takes minutes for a house to fill with thick black smoke and become engulfed in flames.

Practice Escaping From Every Room In The Home

Practice escape plans every month. The best plans have two ways to get out of each room. If the primary way is blocked by fire or smoke, you will need a second way out. A secondary route might be a window onto an adjacent roof or a collapsible ladder for escape from upper story windows. Purchase only

collapsible ladders evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratory (UL). Make sure that windows are not stuck, screens can be taken out quickly and that security bars can be properly opened. Also, practice feeling your way out of the house in the dark or with your eyes closed.

Immediately Leave The Home

When a fire occurs, do not waste any time saving property. Take the safest exit route, but if you must escape through smoke, remember to crawl low, under the smoke and keep your mouth and nose covered. The smoke contains toxic gases which can disorient you or, at worst, overcome you.

Once Out, Stay Out

Remember to escape first, then notify the fire department using the 911 system or proper local emergency number in your area. Never go back into a burning building for any reason. Teach children not to hide from firefighters. If someone is missing, tell the firefighters. They are equipped to perform rescues safely.

Automobile fires can produce toxic gases. Automobiles, trucks, and other motor vehicles are made of many synthetic materials that emit harmful, if not deadly gases when they burn. A main by-product of fires is a lethal concentration of carbon monoxide, which is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas.

Fire can cause fatal or debilitating burn injuries. A car fire can generate heat upwards of 1500 degrees Fahrenheit. Keep in mind that water boils at 212 degrees Fahrenheit, and that most foods are cooked at temperatures less than 500 degrees Fahrenheit. Flames from burning vehicles can often shoot out distances of 10 feet or more.

Parts of the vehicle can burst because of heat, shooting debris great distances. Bumper and hatchback door struts, two-piece tire rims, magnesium wheels, drive shafts, grease seals, axles, and engine parts, all can become lethal shrapnel. Vehicle fires may also cause air bags to deploy.



Although relatively rare, gas tanks of motor vehicles can rupture and spray flammable fuel, posing a clear potential for serious injury. In even more extraordinary instances, gas tanks have been known to explode. Hazardous materials, such as battery acid, can cause injury without warning.

Car fires are so dangerous that firefighters wear full protective gear and self-contained breathing apparatus to keep themselves safe. They also have the ability to quickly put out vehicle fires with large amounts of water or other extinguishing agents. You don't have these safety advantages; so use extra precaution.

Car fires can be dangerous - Nearly 1 out of 4 fires involves motor vehicles. One out of 8 fire deaths results from car fires. Approximately 550 are killed and 2,100 civilians and 1,200 firefighters are injured a year from motor vehicle fires.

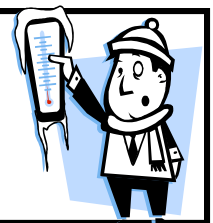
If There is a Fire, What Should You Do? - Get yourself and all others out of and away from the vehicle. If the vehicle is in a garage or other structure, exit immediately. After you are a safe distance from the vehicle, call the fire department at **9-1-1**. Tell them the location of the car fire. Remain away from the vehicle; do not attempt to get back into a burning vehicle to retrieve personal property.

Never put yourself in danger using a fire extinguisher. If you do use a fire extinguisher, only do so from a safe distance and always have a means to get away. It is recommended to use a fire extinguisher approved for use on class "B" and class "C" fires.

Do not open the hood or trunk if you suspect a fire under it. Air could rush in, enlarging the fire, leading to injury.

The dangers of a car fire are often overlooked. Each year, these fires kill over 550 people and injure thousands more. Toxic gases and other hazardous substances, and flying debris and explosion, combine to produce serious dangers in motor vehicle fires.

Before it gets too cold outside -- have your heating system cleaned & checked, chimney swept & inspected, water heater serviced & adjusted, restock emergency survival kit, and update family emergency contacts.



Help Reduce False Alarms

Over 25% of the emergency responses made by the Signal Hill Fire Department in 2010 were categorized either “False Alarms” or “False Calls.” These types of incidents are the highest percentage of all of the emergency responses made last year. While this may not seem to be a cause of great concern to the general public, there are risks and costs associated with every emergency response made.

False Alarms/Calls can be broken down into sub-categories - Unintentional or System Malfunction, etc. Data associated with each sub-category is collected and reviewed to determine if public education and awareness can be used to reduce the call volume requiring an emergency response. After analyzing the data, corrective actions can be identified to reduce the occurrences of false alarms/calls.

Unintentional Alarms are often associated with cooking vapors or steam from bathrooms. Smoke detectors do not differentiate between vapors, steam, or smoke from a fire. The detector then transmits an alarm condition to your security company, in turn notifying the Fire Department. Once the Fire Department is notified, emergency response protocols are initiated.

Keep a close watch when cooking. Use kitchen exhaust hoods/filters to reduce odors/vapors. Never leave cooking activities unattended — even for just a few minutes. Cooking is the leading cause of fires in the United States, often caused by inattentiveness or distractions. Attentiveness is the best way to reduce fires and false alarms.

Using a bathroom exhaust fan removes steam directly to the outside. Relocating a smoke detector a little further away from the bathroom door can prevent the unintentional activation of a smoke detector. As with cooking related alarms, a relatively simple remedy is all that is needed to decrease false alarms.



System Malfunctions also contribute to the false alarm problem. Like any other system in your home, (heating, air conditioning, plumbing, etc.) fire alarms need to be maintained and serviced on a regular basis. If your home is so equipped, a fire alarm system should

be serviced annually by your system provider. Backup batteries in alarm control panels should be checked or replaced. Smoke detectors should be cleaned at least twice annually — replaced every ten years.

Every time a fire truck “rolls out,” firefighters are placed at risk. Your assistance in being proactive with the above actions will reduce unnecessary emergency responses, lessen dangers faced by firefighters and make our community safer.



The Signal Hill Fire Department
Welcomes Our Newest Members

Associate-Roy Mueller
Active - Ryan Young
Mike Lamb

*Improving the Quality of Life in Our Community
24/7 - 365 Days a Year*

The Signal Hill Fire Department has revised its website. Visit us online at www.SHFD.net

Thanks to everyone who supported Ribs & Raffle Day on June 26th. The weather was great, the ribs were great, and a grand day was had by all. More importantly, all the funds raised are being reinvested to help protect our community from fire and other catastrophic events.

Thanks to our sponsors for their generous support.

Allards Shoe Repair
 Belleville Health & Sports Center
 Belleville WalMart Supercenter
 Collinsville Area Recreation District
 Commerce Bank
 Eckerts Orchards, Inc.
 Fischer's Restaurant
 Fletcher's Kitchen & Tap
 Fun Spot Skating Center
 Gateway Grizzlies
 Hollywood Tan
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 Shop-N-Save
 Shrine Restaurant
 Six Flags
 Smokey Bones Barbeque & Grill
 St. Clair Bowl
 St. Louis Cardinals
 The Lincoln Theatre
 The Magic House
 Towers Fire Apparatus
 YMCA of Southwestern Illinois
 Chief Greg Render
 Firefighter Shelley Hudson
 Captain Gary Bainter and family
 Firefighter and Mrs. Alan Render
 Assistant Chief & Mrs. Tom Elliff

Thank You!



Carbon monoxide (CO) is a deadly, colorless, odorless, poisonous gas. It is produced by the incomplete burning of various fuels, including coal, wood, charcoal, oil, kerosene, propane, and natural gas. Products and equipment powered by internal combustion engines such as portable generators, cars, lawn mowers, and power washers also produce CO.

Because CO is odorless, colorless, and otherwise undetectable to the human senses, people may not know that they are being exposed. The initial symptoms of low to moderate CO poisoning are similar to the flu (but without the fever). They include:

- Headache
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Dizziness

High level CO poisoning results in progressively more severe symptoms, including:

- Mental confusion
- Vomiting
- Loss of muscular coordination
- Loss of consciousness
- Ultimately death

Illinois State law requires that every home have a carbon monoxide alarm installed near every room used for sleeping purposes.

This job is hot.

**Think you can
stand the heat?**

Join the Signal Hill Fire Department



Signal Hill

Fire Department

329 Hazel Avenue
Belleville, Illinois 62223

NONPROFIT ORG.
CARRIER ROUTE
PRESORT
PAID
Belleville, Illinois
PERMIT NO. 880



To Report a Fire Dial 9-1-1



November 7th

This issue of Hot Flashes was courtesy of
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.
Thank you! www.oblatesusa.org

The Signal Hill
Fire Department
has revised its
website. Visit us
online at
www.SHFD.net

