

FIRE PREVENTION INFO



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

This is the start of a new year, so we decided to do something special to “jump-start” your fire prevention activities. We are offering two incentives with this issue.

The first is a wealth of fire prevention information and ideas you can use to supplement your program during January, February and March.

The second incentive will require a little thinking on your part. There are two things different about this publication. The first person to call the Lincoln office with the correct answers will receive a box of free fire prevention materials. The only hint I will give is. . . you should have one thing figured out already. We will be waiting to hear from you.

Call Jean Paff at 402-472-2733 with your answers and a chance to receive free fire prevention materials.

Remember, fire plays for keeps.

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2012 TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

NEBRASKA WILDFIRE ACADEMY
APRIL 14-22, 2012
FORT ROBINSON STATE PARK
CRAWFORD, NE

NEBRASKA STATE FIRE SCHOOL
MAY 18-20, 2012
GRAND ISLAND, NE

Join firefighters, rural board members, fire officials, city administrators, attorneys and community leaders from Nebraska and other states in the nation to learn and share ideas about fire prevention and fire suppression. This is the largest fire school of its type in the nation. This is your school and your state. The responsibility is yours. Make plans to attend now.

To view upcoming NFS fire training opportunities: www.nfs.unl.edu
Click on Events and Training Opportunities.



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Fire Prevention Begins with YOU!

HOT SPOTS IN YOUR HOME

FURNACES

Let's take a look at the home furnace. It's easy to take it for granted. When we want more heat, we turn up the thermostat, and that is it, right? Well, you should do a little more than that to heat your home.

- Check the furnace periodically for any rusted or loosened mountings.
- Keep flammable materials away from the furnace.
- Consider installing a ceiling of fire-resistant material in your furnace room, especially in a basement that is used often.
- A yearly check-up and cleaning by a qualified furnace technician—before the start of the heating season—is a reasonably priced service that can bring you more efficient heat and more peace of mind.

DRYER VENTS

A potential hot spot in homes that is often overlooked is the clothes dryer vent.

- Check your dryer vent and vent hose periodically to make sure lint doesn't build up. This could ignite and start a fire.
- Your dryer vent should be made of rigid metal which is not easily damaged by heat, age and contact with other materials. Accordion venting, whether it is metal or plastic, is much more likely to crimp and trap lint than a rigid vent.
- Dryers should be vented in a straight line for as short a distance as possible, never more than 25 feet.
- The vent should go directly to the exterior of your home, not into a crawl space, attic, chimney or garage.
- A back draft damper at the vent's termination point will also help prevent any problems.

ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

- Never overload circuits or extension cords.
- Do not place cords and wires under rugs, over nails or in high traffic areas.
- When using appliances follow the manufacturer's safety precautions.
- Overheating, unusual smells, short circuits and sparks are all warning signs that appliances need to be shut off. It is time to replace the appliance or have it professionally repaired.
- Unplug appliances when not in use.
- Use safety caps to cover all unused outlets, especially if there are small children in the house.

HEATING WITH WOOD

Wood stoves and fireplaces cause thousands of home fires every year.

- Your chimney needs to be inspected every year, then cleaned to remove any creosote, a hard black substance.
- Do not use large amounts of paper or cardboard to build a roaring fire.
- A glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace will prevent sparks from jumping out.
- A spark from the fireplace can easily ignite any flammable materials on your mantle.
- Never burn charcoal indoors. Burning charcoal gives off a poisonous gas called carbon monoxide.
- Do not use flammable liquid to start a fire or add to a fire that is already lit.
- Be sure your fireplace fire is out before you go to bed.
- When you clean out your fireplace or wood stove, put the ashes in a metal container. Keep them outside and away from the house or garage.



FIRE PREVENTION AND CHILDREN

AFTER SCHOOL: KIDS NEED SUPPORT

Millions of children of all ages go home from school every day to an empty house. They let themselves into the house and remain alone until their parents come home from work. Most families set rules and guidelines to help these children help themselves, but they are on their own.

Emergencies strike quickly and the child may not have time to ask parents for advice. All children should learn basic fire prevention rules.

Cooking should be done only by older children, with prior approval from the parent and with extreme caution. Nothing should be left cooking unattended on the stove, even for a minute.

Microwave ovens can cause severe burns and scalds because children expect them to be safe. Don't forget the cooked foods or liquids are extremely hot and can spill or boil over easily.

If a burn occurs, run plenty of cool water over the burn, never apply butter or a greasy substance. If necessary, call your doctor or an ambulance.

If clothing catches fire, DO NOT RUN.

- Stop immediately
- Drop to the floor,
- Roll back and forth to smother the flames

If a fire starts, do not hide from it or try to fight it. Leave the house immediately. Go to a neighbor's house to report the fire to the fire department.

Although there have been latchkey children since the 1880s, World War II brought more of them to light as fathers were shipped overseas and mothers entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers.

Today, more than half of all school children have working mothers. Between 3 million and 6.5 million children from the ages of 6-17 care for themselves after school. The children cannot be pinpointed because such children are hard to identify. Parents often do not tell others, both to protect the children and because they may be embarrassed and feel guilty. Children are also warned not to tell anyone they are home alone.

DANGER: CHILDREN & LIGHTERS

Children under five are naturally curious about fire. Tragically, children set more than 25,000 house fires every year.

- Take the mystery out of fire play by teaching children that fire is a tool, not a toy.
- Keep lighter and matches out of sight and reach of children.
- Children under five years of age are capable of lighting cigarette lighters and matches.
- Never encourage or allow a child to play with a lighter. Do not use it as a source of amusement for a child. Once their curiosity is aroused, children may seek out a lighter and try to light it.

IT'S ABOUT TIME!

By 70 years of age, a person has spent:

- 20 years sleeping
- 20 years working
- 6 years eating
- 7 years playing
- 5 years dressing
- 3 years on the phone
- 2 1/2 years smoking (if smoker)
- 3 years waiting for someone
- 5 years tying shoes
- 2 1/2 years for other things

There is certainly time in there to work on fire prevention!

If you convince two people to do something about fire problems and the next day they convinced two people, it would take less than a month to get everyone in the United States to take action!

Fire prevention is a continuous process. It is a rewarding job, but it requires effort. It is also a responsibility that YOU accepted as a firefighter—to protect life and property. It doesn't happen overnight. However, the results are worth the time and effort.

In dealing with fire prevention problems and opportunities, remember to:

- Demonstrate a professional manner and appearance at all times. You never have a second chance to make a good impression.
- Treat people warmly, whether at the worksite or at a program. Always make them feel welcome and comfortable.
- Always be prompt, courteous and friendly when dealing with the public.
- Always adopt a problem-solving attitude when handling a fire prevention problem or inquiry.
- Take time to assess each fire prevention problem and be prepared to offer solutions.
- Make a serious effort to find the right answer to all questions.
- Keep up-to-date on current fire prevention information and techniques.

MANUFACTURED HOMES

Fires in manufactured/modular homes claim the lives of hundreds of Americans each year and injure thousands more. Many of these fires are caused by heating and electrical system malfunctions and improper storage of combustibles.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) would like consumers to know there are simple steps you can take to prevent the loss of life and property in home fires.

THE PROBLEM

During a typical year, manufactured homes account for 21,000 fires, hundreds of deaths and \$180 million in property losses. An estimated 11 million Americans live in manufactured homes, where fire deaths occur at twice the rate of fire deaths in other types of homes.

THE FACTS

Young children account for more than one-fifth of all the deaths in manufactured homes.

THE CAUSE

Electrical system malfunctions and heating fires are the leading cause of fire in manufactured homes. Together, they account for one-third of manufactured housing fires. Electrical distribution fires occur nearly twice as often in manufactured homes as in one- and two-family dwellings.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Have a minimum of two smoke alarms installed in your home regardless of sleeping space arrangements.
- Maintain your home heating system by having it serviced at least once a year by a professional.
- Do not store combustibles or flammables near heat sources.
- Never overload outlets, extension cords or electrical circuits. If the circuit breaker trips or fuses blow, immediately call a licensed electrician to check your system.

- Have an escape plan and practice the escape routes with your family.
- Space heaters need their space. Do not place portable space heaters within three feet of drapes, clothing or other combustible materials.
- Install skirting material to keep leaves and other debris or combustible materials from blowing under your manufactured home.
- When considering a new home, ask if residential sprinklers are available as an option.

If there is a fire—get out immediately. Go to a neighbor’s house, then notify the fire department using the 911 system or the proper local emergency number in your area.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Smoking is the leading cause of house fires.
- The third most common cause of home fires is grease in the kitchen.
- If there is a grease fire on the stove top—PUT A LID ON IT.
- Never add fuel to a portable heater which is turned on or still hot.
- Never run a space heater cord under a carpet or furniture.
- Keep all flammable materials at least three feet away from portable space heaters.
- Never use a space heater in an area occupied by unsupervised children or pets.
- Never place a space heater in high traffic areas such as a hallway or doorway.
- Use space heaters ONLY in well-ventilated areas.
- Never smoke in bed or leave smoking materials unattended.
- Before going to bed, empty all ashtrays into the toilet or a metal container.

A WOMAN’S POINT OF VIEW

Each season brings its unique fire prevention challenges. During the winter months, many cultures have celebrations full of symbolism. Often the celebrations involve flames—from blazing bonfires to the solitary light of a candle. Unfortunately candles are responsible for many house fires during the holiday season.

Frequently a candle is used as part of a ceremony (such as Chanukah or Kwanzaa) or for holiday decorations. For all your holiday celebrations, consider using battery-operated flameless candles. They provide the same inviting ambiance to the room.

The candles have a wax exterior, but the internal light source is a LED bulb which provides a warm glow, complete with a flickering light. With the installation of a battery you have many weeks of candlelight without the anxiety of a child or pet knocking the candle over; trying to remember if it was extinguished before leaving the house, etc.

Flameless candles are available in a variety of sizes and shapes—tea lights, votives, tapers or pillars. There is an increasing variety of colors and scents. Some are even on timers. They are available in the candle section at major retailers, as well as online.



During this time of year families and friends gather together to eat and to celebrate. Many families have special holiday traditions. In the hustle and bustle of the season with holiday meals, delicious baked goods and tasty snacks—take a few minutes to make your kitchen a safer place.

- Clean grease and food from the stove and/or oven after each use.
- Cook on back burners whenever possible.
- Turn pot handles inward to prevent them from getting bumped or grabbed.
- Keep all cloth and paper products from heat sources.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO RECORD FIRE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES ON THE NEBRASKA FOREST SERVICE WEBSITE:
www.nfs.unl.edu

Near the bottom of the page on the left side, click on REPORTING; FIRE PREVENTION REPORTING.

The password is your county name, properly capitalized and properly spaced, e.g. Dodge, Red Willow.

If you are unable to access this information using a computer, contact Jean to request pink cards to fill out activities manually, then return by mail.

PLEASE SEND COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS TO:

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