

From: Fire Chief David Berardesca

Due to the recent number of tragic fires which have occurred throughout the Northeast, the members of the Hamden Fire Department wish to remind all in our community of the dangers of fire. Statistically, children and our elderly population are more commonly affected by the dangers of fires and heat related injuries.

Your Firefighters provide continuous fire safety and prevention education to all age groups. Providing education throughout the entire year could help save lives. Please share the following fire safety and prevention tips with family and friends. The men and women of the Hamden Fire Department are committed to protecting and educating the community it serves every day.

Make sure all family members know what to do in the event of a fire. Draw a floor plan with at least two ways of escaping every room. Make a drawing for each floor. Dimensions do not need to be correct. Make sure the plan shows important details: stairs, hallways and windows that can be used as fire escape routes.

Test windows and doors—do they open easy enough? Are they wide enough or tall enough?

Choose a safe meeting place outside the house.

Ppractice alerting other members. It is a good idea to keep a bell and flashlight in each bedroom.

Conduct a family meeting and discuss the following topics:

- Always sleep with the bedroom doors closed. This will keep deadly heat and smoke out of bedrooms, giving you additional time to escape.
- Find a way for everyone to sound a family alarm. Yelling, pounding on walls, whistles, etc.
- In a fire, time is critical. Don't waste time getting dressed, don't search for pets or valuables. Just get out!
- Roll out of bed. Stay low. One breath of smoke or gases may be enough to kill.

Be Prepared – Plan Ahead

Ppractice evacuating the building blindfolded. In a real fire situation, the amount of smoke generated by a fire most likely will make it difficult to see.

Ppractice staying low to the ground when escaping.

Feel all doors before opening them. If a door is hot, get out another way.

Learn to stop, drop to the ground, and roll if clothes catch fire.

Additional Fire Safety Tips

Install Smoke and Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detectors

Check smoke and CO detectors once a month and change the batteries at least once a year. Smoke detectors sense abnormal amounts of smoke or invisible combustion gases in the air. They can detect both smoldering and burning fires. CO detectors measure for dangerous levels of carbon monoxide in the home. At least one smoke detector and one CO should be installed on every level of a structure. Purchase smoke and CO detectors labeled by the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM).

Post Emergency Numbers Near Telephones.

Be aware that if a fire threatens your home, you should not place the call to emergency services from inside the home. It is better to get out and place the call to fire authorities from a safe location outside the home.

After a Fire Emergency

Give first aid where appropriate. Seriously injured victims should be transported to professional medical help immediately. Stay out of the damaged building. Return only when fire authorities say it is safe.

Make Sure You Have a Safe Fire Escape Method For All Situations

You may have installed a very expensive home security system. But if you cannot escape the burning structure you have a false level of confidence.

Space Heaters Need Space

Keep portable and space heaters at least 3 feet from anything that may burn. Never leave heaters on when you leave home or go to sleep. Children and pets should always be kept away from them.

Smokers Need To Be Extra Careful

Never smoke in bed or when you are sleepy. Carelessly discarded cigarettes are a leading cause of fire deaths in the United States.

Be Careful Cooking

Keep cooking areas clear of combustibles and wear short or tight-fitting sleeves when you cook. Keep the handles of your pots turned inward so they do not over-hang the stove. If grease catches fire, carefully slide a lid over the pan and smother the flames, then turn off the burner.

Matches and Lighters are Dangerous

In the hands of a child, matches and lighters can be deadly! Store them where kids can't reach them, preferably in a locked area. Teach children that matches and lighters are "tools" and should only be used by adults.

Use Electricity Safely

If an appliance smokes or has an unusual smell, unplug it immediately and have it repaired. Replace frayed or cracked electrical cords and don't overload extension cords. They should not be run under rugs. Never tamper with the fuse box or use the improper size fuse.

Cool a Burn

If someone gets burned, immediately place the wound under cool water for 10 to 15 minutes. If the burn blisters or chars, see a doctor immediately!

Be Careful of Halogen Lights

If you have halogen lights, make sure they are away from flammable drapes and low ceiling areas. Never leave them on when you leave your home or office.

Candles

Never leave a candle unattended. Make sure candles are placed away from any flammable materials. Candles should always be placed in a secure holder. Never burn candles in the bedroom or bathroom.

Heat Your Home Safely

Have your heating system checked and cleaned annually. Use caution when using alternative heating sources such as wood or coal. Keep chimney flues clean. Keep chimneys free of debris by the installation of an approved chimney cap. Obstructed chimney flues can produce dangerous carbon monoxide gases in the home.

For more information on fire safety and prevention, contact the Hamden Fire Department @ 407-5880

“Your Safety is Our Mission”