



March Fire and Life Safety Bulletin 2017

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Smoke alarms are an early warning device in case of fire, *if they are in working order.*



All too often when we respond to a fire incident, the smoke alarm is not operating due to a dead or missing battery. This normally means there was no regular period of time for battery replacement, the smoke alarm was going off creating a nuisance or the battery was taken out to use in something else. *Please understand* that none of these reasons are valid and they take away the only early warning device you may have in case of a fire. Early warning is critical to the survival of any occupants in the home during a fire incident. Recent studies have shown that fires move much quicker today due to the type of building supplies and contents. These products off-gas more smoke and burn much hotter than we have seen in years past. Having smoke alarms at a minimum on each level of the home are now more important than ever. If you purchase new smoke alarms, invest in the type that has a ten year battery. This removes the worry of changing batteries. Also all smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years. To make this task even easier, **the Metro Area Fire Departments give away free**

Clothes Dryer Fires - Throughout the Richmond area dryer fires continue to be a problem in residential structural fires. These fires can cause an extreme amount of damage to the building. Such fires are most often related to a lack of maintenance on the part of the owner. Dryers collect a tremendous amount of lint both in the lint trap and the exhaust tubing. Maintenance includes cleaning these areas on a regular basis. Ensure the exhaust duct is not restricted in any way. It must stay connected to the dryer and external port. Monthly, this duct work should be taken loose and checked to see there is not a buildup of lint in it or in the dryer. Of course again clean the lint trap before every use. In case of a fire, if possible shut-down the dryer and call 9-1-1. Fires of these types can burn in hidden spaces of the floor and/or walls for which the fire department is better suited to discover and handle.

smoke alarms, batteries and installation. The only thing you need to do is call 1-888-537-5967 to schedule a visit from your local firefighters. *Are you dedicated to Life Safety?*

Cooking Fires Still Remain #1

Unattended cooking is still the #1 cause of residential fires in the City of Richmond. A simple pan of grease can overheat very quickly, flame up and spread to nearby combustibles. These type of fires are also the leading cause of burn injuries. If the fire has extended beyond the pan, alert everyone to leave the house and call 9-1-1.

Sports Eye Injury and Protective Eyewear

Parents and coaches play an important role in making sure young athletes protect their eyes. Protective eyewear should be part of any uniform because it plays such an important role in reducing sports-related eye injuries. Such injuries are the leading cause of blindness in children in the United States. Most injuries occurring in school-aged children are sports related. These injuries account for an estimated 100,000 physician visits per year at a cost of more than \$175 million.

Ninety percent of sports-related eye injuries can be avoided with the use of protective eyewear. This includes safety glasses and goggles, safety shields, and eye guards designed for a particular sport. Ordinary prescription glasses, contact lenses and sunglasses do not protect against eye injuries. Safety goggles should be worn over them. Currently, most youth sports leagues do not require the use of eye protection. Parents and coaches must step up to insist that children wear safety glasses or goggles whenever they play sports.

2017 Virginia Tornado Drill Tuesday, March 21, at 9:45 a.m.

The Statewide Drill is a yearly opportunity to prepare Virginians for tornado emergencies and to test public warning systems. The National Weather Service will send a tornado warning over NOAA Weather Radios.

Before the Drill:

- Make sure everyone knows the date and time of the drill.
- Have a plan: Where and how will everyone shelter in place? Does anyone need special

National Poison Prevention Week March 19-25, 2017

Poisoning is the #1 cause of injury-related death in the U.S. Each year the third week in March is designated as National Poison Prevention Week, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the burden of poisoning in the U.S. Poison centers are equipped, 24 hours a day, seven days a week to manage an array of calls. Staff provides free, confidential, expert medical advice from toxicology specialists including nurses, pharmacists, physicians and poison information providers. Be prepared for a poisoning emergency and program the Poison Help phone number into your mobile telephone today ---- 1-800-222-1222.

Remember that Carbon Monoxide is a poison. Install a CO detector in your home and check or replace the battery regularly. Never use a generator inside your home, basement or garage.