

# A p a r t m e n t

## SAFETY NOTES



SPOKANE FIRE DEPARTMENT

MAY 2011

### ARSON AWARENESS MONTH



Fire Departments in the U.S. respond to over 50,000 intentionally set (arson) structure fires each year. These fires cause about 400 deaths, 1,000 injuries and nearly \$1 billion in property damage. About 50% of persons arrested for arson each year are age 18 or younger.

While you may not be able to stop someone who is determined to burn a building, you can take preventative measures to reduce the chances of your building becoming an "easy fire" target.

- Secure vacant units to prevent vandalism and fires.
- Frequently check the perimeter of your property for abandoned trash or dried bushes / weeds too close to the building.
- Think like someone who wants to be sneaky with fire and then make sure that potential hiding places are cleared and illuminated.
- Install motion-sensor lighting near doorways and in obscured areas around the building.
- Monitor smoking zones outside of the building to assure lighters are never left outside for the assumed convenience of smokers and the real convenience of kids looking for a fire experience.

### ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

Arson and electrical safety are the focus of separate educational campaigns across the U.S. during the month of May. It is interesting to note that fire loss statistics compiled by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) are similar for each of these two fire problems. Over the past several years, there were about 51,000 electrical fires annually that resulted in approximately 500 deaths and \$1.3 billion in property loss.



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Electrical Safety Foundation International, the major sponsor of National Electrical Safety Month, offers a home tour with good safety tips at <http://virtualhome.esfi.org>. In addition, the site has six short and informative videos on arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs), ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), tamper resistant receptacles, space heaters, extension cords and smoke detectors.

May is a good season and safety a good reason for reviewing the electrical integrity of your units and the electrical awareness of your tenants!

- Inspect your property to ensure that outlets in each unit can currently meet the demand of typical home electronics and electrical appliances.
- Install arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) to detect hazardous arcing conditions before a fire ignites.
- Encourage tenants to unplug their toaster, coffee pot and battery charger when they are not in use.
- Help tenants understand that extension cords are only intended for “temporary” use.
- Remind tenants that extension cords should never be used to connect appliances that heat or cool, e.g. irons, space heaters and air conditioners.
- Instruct tenants to never plug a second appliance into any outlet that already connects a heater or air conditioner.

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You can sign up for this monthly newsletter, ask a fire-related question or suggest a specific safety topic by contacting Jan Doherty at [jdoherly@spokanefire.org](mailto:jdoherly@spokanefire.org) or by calling 625-7058.

Access this edition of Apartment Safety Notes as well as back issues at [www.spokanefire.org](http://www.spokanefire.org) under “Prevention”.



## Recalled Fans and Heaters

It is difficult to keep tabs on the many safety recalls of common consumer products that happen each month.

Go to [www.laskoproducts.com](http://www.laskoproducts.com) to learn more about the 4.8 million Lasko box fans that were recalled in March because of an electrical failure in the motor and the 107,500 Lasko heaters recalled in February. Consumers can get a free replacement heater. In addition, check the [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) website (under *Recalled products, electric heaters*) to learn more about the recall of 2.2 million heaters sold at Wal-Mart under the brand names Flow Pro, Airtech, Aloha Breeze and Comfort Essentials for Model 1013. These units can be returned to Wal-Mart for a full refund.

These websites offer pictures of the recalled items which can be posted in a common area for your tenants to read.

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## Renter's Insurance: Educational Outreach

If you have concerns about tenants recognizing the need for renter's insurance, please consider becoming part of a special committee that will work with Spokane Fire Department to better inform tenants and landlords of the importance of this type of protection.



Be sure to visit our website at  
[www.spokanefire.org](http://www.spokanefire.org)

There you will find links to our blog, Facebook,  
Twitter and YouTube pages!

