

A p a r t m e n t

SAFETY NOTES

SPOKANE FIRE DEPARTMENT

November, 2011



CHANGE CLOCK and MORE

Sunday November 6 is the official day to change from Daylight Savings Time by turning clocks **back** one hour. Fire Departments across the nation ask every household to include a smoke detector check-up when changing their clocks.

•Read the back label of smoke detectors to determine whether there is at least one PHOTOELECTRIC (vs. *ionization*) model on

each level of the home.

- Check the exact date of manufacture on the back label to assure detectors are less than 10 years old. While the alarm horn may still sound, the sensor has an estimated 30% failure rate at 10 years.
- Test each detector to verify the batteries are fresh and solidly connected.

HEATING PRECAUTIONS

As November days grow colder and tenants rely more on supplementary heating sources, it is important for everyone to be alert to the potential problems associated with fireplaces, space heaters, and baseboard heaters. Heating equipment causes many of the residential fires that occur from November through February. These include fires caused by tenants using their ovens as a heating source!



For apartments with five or more units, managers can help prevent rooftop fires by scheduling a professional chimney sweep to clean out flammable creosote deposits. Cleaners can also inspect for cracks or blockages that may result in a carbon monoxide buildup in the home. Tenants need to know the importance of using seasoned (dried) wood and how to safely dispose ashes away from the building. Tenants should also be reminded of an increased creosote fire danger from burning paper as well as the chance of an explosion caused by burning holiday wrapping paper in a fireplace.

With limited space in many apartments, tenants may be tempted to place furniture too close to baseboard heaters. Any type of combustible material (e.g. curtains, upholstery, bedspreads, and stuffed animals) should be kept at least 12 inches away from baseboard heaters.

continued 

continued from page 1

Space heaters present even more of a danger to common combustibles and should be kept at least 3 feet away from anything that burns. Tenants should never plug heaters into an extension cord or power strip. They must also be mindful to turn heaters completely off when going to sleep or leaving the apartment.

Check out the Consumer Product Safety Commission website at www.cpsc.gov under "Electric Heaters" to review heaters that your tenants may unwittingly have in their households. For example Lasko recalled 107,500 portable electric heaters last February and Wal-Mart recalled 2.2 million small heaters last December. A printout of one of these recalls may be an important addition to your Apartment Bulletin Board!

Turkey Fryers

Since some cooks still prefer to deep-fry their holiday turkey, you may want to suggest tenants first view the following video from Underwriters Laboratories (UL): <http://www.safetyathome.com/seasonal-safety/holiday-safety-articles/turkey-fryers-not-certified-by-ul/>

If the turkey is not completely thawed when placed in hot oil, it can easily cause a spillover that ignites the oil and engulfs the entire unit in fire. Predictably, there will be some homes also burned when turkey fryers are placed on wooden decks or under awnings.



Since there are no thermostat controls on turkey fryers and the units can easily tip over, UL does not certify any turkey fryers.



Holiday Decorating

- Select flameless, battery-operated candles instead of open flame ones.
- Never have more than 3 strings of small lights or 50 larger bulb Christmas lights on one extension cord.
- Check multi-plug strips or surge protectors to make sure the outlets are not discolored or melted.
- Never nail electric cords into the wall. Use plastic light hangers instead.
- Never use interior extension cords on outside decorations.
- If selecting a fresh tree, cut about 2" additional from the trunk before putting it in the stand and daily maintain the water level. Dispose of the tree as soon as needles begin to dry out or fall.
- Never block an exit with trees or other decorations.
- Keep trees and decorations at least 3 feet away from any heat source or vent.

If you missed a previous edition of Spokane Fire Department's Apartment Newsletter, go to www.spokanefire.org, hit "Prevention" on the red bar at the top of the page, then scroll down to the left for our Apartment Newsletter.

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



Be sure to visit our website at www.spokanefire.org

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

