

A p a r t m e n t

SAFETY



NOTES

SPOKANE FIRE DEPARTMENT

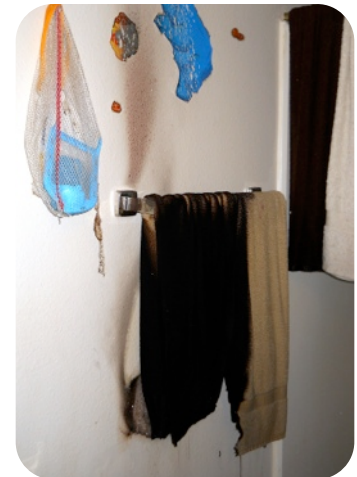
August 2012

TWO “SAVES” IN SPOKANE



Usually when there is a house or apartment fire, you read the details of destruction in the newspaper or watch television coverage of flames, deadly smoke and the Red Cross providing immediate care for families left without shelter. However, when there is a sprinkler system in the picture, the outcome is very different.

Were you aware that sprinklers stopped two apartment fires this past spring in the City of Spokane that were started by preschoolers? With the sprinkler system, there were no injuries to tenants or responding firefighters. Although there was water damage in both cases, there was no concern for structural integrity and the majority of tenants were quickly returned to their apartments. When people look for fire statistics, they sometimes search only for losses in life or property. With sprinkler systems now in more residential units, we can more accurately look at what has been saved instead.



This fire was started in a bathroom by a toddler. It was stopped by a fire sprinkler before it could spread

In one of our recent apartment “saves” there was about \$100,000 in water damage. But that cost paled in comparison to the \$15 million insured value of the building and the lives of family members and staff that would have been displaced with a full-fledged fire event.

PRESCHOOLERS and FIRE



We don't like to think that cute little preschoolers can actually start tragic fires. But the fact is that children as young as two years old have been able to work a lighter well enough to spark significant home fires. In addition, toddlers are at a higher risk of dying in child-set fires because they don't know how to react to fire or to get themselves safely outside a burning structure.

More frequently, fires started by youngsters between the ages of 4 and 6 occur because a curious child has sudden access to a lighter. Since human beings don't have the brain capacity to understand the danger and dynamics of fire until about age 8, it is critical for parents, babysitters, apartment managers and neighbors to stay alert to the potential danger of stray lighters and to know how to quickly respond to any fire.

- ✓ Keep ALL lighters out of the reach of children, preferably in a locked container.
- ✓ Install smoke detectors in all bedrooms used by children. Bedding is the most common “first lit” object.
- ✓ Teach children “Hands Off” lighters and other hot or dangerous objects.
- ✓ Monitor what young children see regarding fire on TV, especially in cartoons.



NEW SOAP! NEW DANGER!



The highly concentrated packets of some liquid detergents can appear as very attractive “candy” or “squishy balls” to young children. The American Association of Poison Control Centers and experts at America’s 57 poison centers are urging the public to keep

these single dose packs out of the reach of young children.

Toddlers who have swallowed these packets have become seriously ill with some requiring hospitalization and treatment on a ventilator. While other laundry detergents may cause only a mildly upset stomach, ingestion of these packets can rapidly cause significant symptoms impacting stomach, lungs and eyes.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission is working with detergent manufacturers and Poison Centers to investigate the various brands of concentrated single dose laundry packs and the recent upsurge in poisoning incidents. In the meantime, please alert your staff and tenants to the danger associated with this laundry product.

- ✓ Keep detergents locked up and high, out of the reach of small children.
- ✓ Follow the instructions on product label.
- ✓ **Immediately** call the WA Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 if you think a child has been exposed to a packet of highly concentrated liquid laundry detergent.



Staying Cool

With hot summer days in the forecast, please remind tenants to NEVER use an extension cord or surge protector with a portable air conditioner. Air conditioners must be plugged directly into the wall socket.

For those who have smaller box fans, you may want to post recall information from Lasko www.laskoproducts.com on how to request a free plug safety adapter to prevent a potential electrical failure and fire hazard in the fan’s motor. This information is also available at the Consumer Product Safety Commission (www.cpsc.gov). The recall of 4.8 million units pertains to four Lasko or Galaxy fan models that sold between 2002 and 2005 for less than \$25.

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 or by calling (509)625-7058.

Back issues of Apartment Safety Notes can be accessed at www.spokanefire.org under “Prevention



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