

S A F E T Y N O T E S

March 2013



SAFER HOUSING

For the past 13 years, Spokane C.O.P.S. has helped landlords and managers receive the training required to have their apartment properties certified as Crime Free Multi-Housing communities. The next training opportunity is set for two consecutive Thursdays, April 18 and April 25, from 8 AM to 5 PM at St. Ann's Hall, 2116 E. 1st Ave.

Thirteen instructors will present topics ranging from Fair Housing, gang threats, and I.D. theft to fire safety and CPTED (or crime prevention through environmental design).

Locks, addressing and exterior design are three areas of common concern for our public safety departments. While the Police Department recommends well-locked doors to **keep** people out, the Fire Department emphasizes deadbolt locks with one-movement action systems to **get** people out! Fire fatalities have happened because people are trapped by double-key deadbolt locks or window and screen door security bars lacking interior quick-release levers.

For both Police and Fire, easy-to-read addressing on all residences is essential to an efficient emergency response. In Spokane, some apartments still lack individual unit numerals on each door. Decorative addressing scripts are never a good idea on buildings: in the middle of the night, it is much quicker to identify "2311" than to decipher "*Twenty Three Eleven*"! Also, there is no safety advantage to painting addresses on curbs: snow and parked cars simply hide the numbers. Delayed arrival due to inadequate addressing costs lives at a crime scene, fire or medical emergency.

Regarding "environmental design", there is again some common ground for police and fire concerns. Both groups advise residents to have "defensible space". Police use the term to recommend that spaces around a building are monitored by neighbors and lights, discouraging theft and vandalism. Firefighters see defensible space as well-watered green spaces, trees and bushes trimmed away from decks, or pine needles removed from the roof. From both police and fire perspectives, defensible space can also mean eliminating collections of cardboard, lumber or trash that an arsonist may discreetly ignite.

If you manage or maintain rental property, you are invited to register for the April Crime Free Multi-Housing classes by contacting Maurece Vulcano at mvulcano@spokanepolice.org or at (509) 835-4572. The registration fee is \$75.

RESCUE STICKER ADVICE

It's OK to put a sticker on your front door that alerts the Fire Department to a PET that may be in the home. You can find these stickers at pet supply stores, veterinarians or on-line. You can also make your own version with a photo of your pet or magazine image of any dog, cat or bird and just write: "In case of fire, please rescue 1 dog and 2 cats from this home."

Firefighters will search for people and animals when they respond to a burning building. While they may be helped by the Pet Alert on the front door, it is NOT OK to put a PEOPLE rescue alert sticker on the door, even though there are companies who still sell them!



Spokane Fire Department discourages the use of stickers that indicate there is a child, an elderly person, or someone with a physical difficulty in the home for the following reasons:

- (1) Firefighters do a systematic search of the home. They will not seek stickers on windows or doors ahead of time.
- (2) Deceitful folks have used those very stickers to target residences housing vulnerable persons.
- (3) People move and leave their stickers.
- (4) "Alert" stickers are used by some people rather than making the effort to assure they have a workable fire escape plan for **everyone** in the household.



SPRING AHEAD

When you change your clocks ahead to Daylight Savings on March 10, take the time to help your residents check whether their smoke detectors are still working.

Replace smoke detectors manufactured before 3-10-2003. Smoke detectors must be replaced every 10 years.

If residents removed batteries because of false alarms, check to see whether they have ionization detectors. These tend to have more false alarms and they should never be installed closer than 20 feet from a stove. Replace ionization detectors with photoelectric ones to reduce false alarms from cooking steam!

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 (509) 625-7058.



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