

S A F E T Y N O T E S

December, 2014



130 YEARS OF SERVICE

The Spokane Fire Department has come a long way in 130 years! Spokane Fire Department was first organized in 1884 by a group of citizens subsequent to a fire the previous year that was fought by bucket brigade and resulted in the destruction of five businesses near Howard and Front Streets. The first piece of firefighting equipment was a small hose cart pulled by hand to any fire incident. The first list of itemized equipment included two horses and totaled less than \$1,500.

A city ordinance was passed after the Great Fire of 1889 to establish a full-time paid fire department. The first staff consisted of a fire chief and assistant along with 26 firefighters. Different teams of horses brought a steam engine and long hooks and ladder to fire scenes. The first motorized fire engine was purchased in 1910 for \$6,000. While it performed “admirably” at fires, it couldn’t climb a hill! By 1916 the Spokane Fire Department had gone from a peak of 40 horses to a completely motorized force.

Today Spokane Fire Department has over 300 employees who provide a wide variety of emergency response services to the 210,000 persons living within the 60 square miles of the City of Spokane. Firefighters from 130 years ago would find it so amazing to see our computer-connected dispatch center that eventually displaced the 14 street alarm boxes connected to a 2,000 pound alarm bell downtown. Early day firefighters would have never dreamed of a department where firefighters were also trained Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) or paramedics. They would marvel at Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) packs providing good air for firefighters, the tiller at Station 4 that enables our ladder to navigate tight downtown corners, and the training on everything from hazardous materials to sprinkler systems and the Jaws of Life. While firefighting tools and emergency response equipment have dramatically changed over the past 130 years, the same spirit of serving the needs of a growing community remains strong!

Holiday Reminders:

Tis' the season for candlelit evenings, festive decorations and gift-giving. From an emergency response perspective, that means reminding everyone of those basic firesafety rules that help prevent the most prevalent types of fire during the winter months.

November through January are the months with the most residential fires caused by heating sources, such as unattended space heaters placed closer than three feet from anything that can burn or chimneys loaded with creosote that have gone without a chimney sweep for more than one year.

Christmas Eve, New Years and Christmas day are the three days that typically are marked by the most candle-caused fires. Fire departments recommend electric candles rather than the standard wax and wick kind. They also remind everyone that two of every three fire fatalities that occurred in 2013 in residential properties that lacked working smoke detectors.



LED Candles are a safe alternative to traditional candles.

Spokane Fire Department has some safety items to suggest as possible stocking stuffers for friends, associates or tenants.

- Battery-operated candles provide a candle-lit ambience without the danger of open flame.
- Kitchen timers help cooks keep on track with the fact that something is on the burner or in the oven. Photoelectric smoke detectors reduce nuisance alarms from cooking and help keep batteries in detectors.
- A small bicycle flashing light clips quickly to a jacket to improve the chances of someone being seen by motorists when walking home from the bus stop at night.
- Four inch numerals in a color contrasting with the exterior house paint would increase the visibility of many Spokane addresses.
- Extra lighting near the outside address could help first responders more quickly identify a unit awaiting emergency medical care.

Thank you for all that you do to help keep the community safer throughout the year.

Spokane Fire Department wishes each of you a safe and happy holiday!

Spokane Fire Department now has five years of Apartment Safety Newsnotes. We invite you to look up seasonal topics or specific items of interest by browsing our archives at <https://beta.spokanecity.org/fire/prevention/newsletters/>

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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