

S A F E T Y N O T E S

February 2014



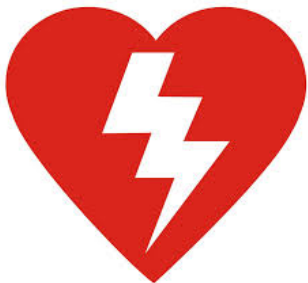
Sometimes it's such an inconspicuous heat source that creates a life-changing residential fire! Most of us have some type of "junk drawer" in the home that holds a variety of small items ranging from pencils to pennies, paper clips to scissors.

Spokane Fire Department recently became aware of the hidden fire danger associated with 9-volt battery terminals coming into contact with metal and heating up to the point any combustibles in the vicinity of the battery begin to burn. [This video from Boston TV station WBZ](#), demonstrates how quickly a simple 9-volt battery can short and transform into a fire hazard.

Beyond the junk drawer scenario, 9-volt batteries can also ignite a fire when the terminals are not covered by electrical tape prior to disposal. Listen to www.KidsAndCharacter.com as David and Janet share their experience of a major home fire caused by the shorting of "dead" 9-volt batteries in a recycling package.

Safety tips for storing 9-volt batteries include the following:

- Keep 9-volt batteries in original packaging until used.
- Keep the protective cap that comes with the batteries for later use.
- Dispose of used 9-volt batteries by covering the terminals with the original protective cap or by putting electrical tape on the positive and negative terminals before recycling.



HAPPY HEARTS

Give new meaning to Valentines messages by linking in to www.heart.org and discovering the American Heart Association's efforts to keep our hearts healthy! You will find information on CPR and AED training plus guidelines for choosing a heart-healthier life style. Make February a month for doing something positive with AHA for all the hearts in your life!

Dryer Fires

According to the latest data available from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), clothes dryers caused over 16,000 residential fires, 51 deaths, 380 injuries and \$236 million in direct property damage in 2010. While the numbers vary somewhat from year to year, there are some common factors that need to be addressed on a daily basis. For managers, the following checklist from the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM) should prove helpful.



- Make sure dryers are properly installed and that rigid or semi-rigid sheet metal is used for venting. Never use plastic venting devices.
- Use the shortest and straightest vent length possible. Use a louvered or box hood style cap on the vent outside.
- Occasionally remove the lint filter and clean it with a nylon brush and hot, soapy water. Also clean the back of the dryer where lint can be trapped.
- Have a qualified service person clean the interior of the dryer and venting system once a year.

It is also a good idea to post a sign for your tenants that includes AHAM's basic dryer safety tips.

- Clean the lint filter before and after using the dryer. Lint is the main cause of dryer fires.
- Set a timer when using the dryer. Never go to sleep or leave the building when the dryer is operating.
- Never use a dryer when clothing has been exposed to any type of flammable liquid (e.g. cooking oil, alcohol, gasoline, spot removers, or dry-cleaning agents). *Washing machines cannot completely remove these liquids and they can ignite or explode in the dryer. Instead, dry those items outside or in a well-ventilated room away from heat.*
- Items made of foam, rubber, plastic or other heat-sensitive fabrics (e.g bathroom rugs or non-slip mats) must either be line dried or in an air-only dryer cycle without heat.

Spokane Fire Department adds three additional reminders to the list.

- Keep a working smoke detector and fire extinguisher in the laundry area.
- Keep the laundry room smoke free.
- Consider key-access to the laundry room to provide better security and discourage vandalism or arson.

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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