

## S A F E T Y   N O T E S

January 2014



### RINGING IN 2014 SAFETY

January resolutions may help us clear out some old patterns and try a few fresher ideas. In terms of fire prevention, this New Year provides opportunity to review the ways you communicate to residents the importance of their knowing the building fire escape plan and fire safety devices.

Ten years ago, Washington state RCW59.18.060 required landlords to provide a written checklist to assure every tenant is familiar with seven essential aspects of emergency planning. While many landlords provide new tenants with a checklist, it would also be a good reminder for those who have resided in the building prior to 2004 to receive a copy of these fire safety and protection requirements.

(1) Does the building have a fire sprinkler system? Make sure the tenants also know they cannot store combustible items within 18 inches of sprinkler heads.

(2) Does the building have a fire alarm system? When there is no monitored alarm system, residents should know how to also use the pull alarms and to make the 9-1-1 call after they exit

the building. They should know the basic operation of smoke alarms in their individual units and their legal obligation to make sure the devices are always operational.

(3) If there is a smoking policy, does each tenant have a copy? For free technical assistance and support in developing a smoke-free housing policy, contact the Healthy Communities Program at [www.srhd.org](http://www.srhd.org), Spokane Regional Health District.

(4) RCW 59.18.060 requires tenants to know whether or not the building has an emergency notification plan for residents. If there isn't such a plan, residents then know their own responsibilities for being alert to potential emergencies and responding appropriately to every alarm.

(5) In a similar manner, residents are required to know whether there are building-wide emergency evacuation and (6) relocation plans in place. Without such a plan, tenants must figure out their individual response. In terms of a building fire or community-wide emergency, volunteers from the local Red Cross may be of some assistance. But residents have to be aware of their own situation and the potential need to devise shelter or evacuation options.

(7) Finally, every tenant must be provided with a diagram of the emergency evacuation route for their building. In multi-level units, tenants must be aware they cannot depend on elevator service in an emergency.

If you are interested in receiving a simple checklist with these seven requirements, contact [jdoherty@spokanefire.org](mailto:jdoherty@spokanefire.org) at Spokane Fire Department.



## CO Detector Anniversary

Carbon monoxide (CO) detectors have now been required in all rental residences for a full year.

CO forms when fossil fuels such as natural gas, wood, gasoline or charcoal burn incompletely. Since carbon monoxide is an invisible and odorless gas, there are no sensory clues to the presence of CO poisoning in a home setting without the protection of a detector.

Recognizing the fact that common symptoms for CO poisoning include severe headaches, dizziness, fatigue, and nausea, the Environmental Protection Agency has compiled a comparison between carbon monoxide poisoning and the flu.

Symptoms may be attributed to possible CO poisoning by the following indicators:

- You feel better when you are away from the home.
- More than one person in the home gets sick at the same time, rather over a several day period as is the case for flu.
- Family members who spend the most time at home appear to be the most affected.

•Symptoms get worse shortly after turning on a fuel-burning device or running a vehicle in an attached garage.

•Indoor pets also appear ill, drowsy and lethargic.

Spokane Fire Department hopes the installation of CO detectors in your units last year went smoothly. We have heard very positive responses from renters who are grateful for these new devices in their homes.



## After-Holiday Christmas Trees

Did you know that apartment complexes in the City of Spokane can schedule in advance for a one-time, one-location pick up of all the residents' fresh cut trees? Call 509.625.7878 for more information on this service. Trees are accepted up to six feet in height. Taller trees must be cut in half. Trees must be fresh-cut (rather than artificial or flocked) and all decorations must be removed.

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](mailto:jdoherty@spokanefire.org) or by calling 509.625.7058.



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