Spokane FIRE DEPARTMENT ®

Apartment
SAFETY NOTES

May, 2015

PASS IT ALONG!

This safety newsletter began in January 2010. Despite a distribution list of less than 200 addresses, we have enjoyed a larger outreach because so many of our readers pass the message along to friends, colleagues and clients.

We recently learned of a "save" for a reader who learned of the importance of carbon monoxide detectors, typical causes of carbon monoxide in the home and the symptoms of CO poisoning. Recognizing the property manager was legally responsible for installing a CO detector, the reader had requested one. That request was denied until after the tenant had suffered significant CO poisoning due to a malfunctioning heater.

Fortunately, when the individual was sickened, they recalled our article on CO exposure and went to urgent care rather than try to rest in a bedroom saturated with carbon monoxide. After medical care at a local hospital, it still took two weeks for them to return to health.

By contrast, a Maryland father and his seven children died in mid-April from carbon monoxide poisoning in their rented home. All landlords in WA State are required to install one CO detector on each level of the home and outside each sleeping area.

Spokane Fire Department thanks you for passing along these Apartment Safety Notes! You may never know the impact you can have when you share a bit of safety information with others.

To read the complete archive of our previous newsletters, go to https://my.spokanecity.org/fire/prevention/newsletters/ . The Jan. 2010, Jan. 2011 and Nov. 2012 editions have additional information on carbon monoxide.

EARLY SUMMER HOT SPOTS

Drier than normal weather conditions remind us to take additional precautions to prevent outdoor fires this season.

- Simple actions can help reduce residential property loss during national Arson Awareness month this May.

    1) Make sure residents do NOT keep lighters within easy reach of their smoking or barbecue areas. Stray lighters can attract the attention of curious kids or angry adults.
    2) Keep bushes trimmed and combustible trash cleared away from the buildings and perimeter of the property.

- An April wildfire in southern California was started by "unattended cooking". We would typically associate wildfire more with an unattended campfire. This fire appears to have started in or near a home around 6 PM and spread through 1.6 square miles of dry grasses, causing the nighttime evacuation of 300 homes.

- A number of homes and apartment units in Spokane have burned down due to cigarettes stubbed out in flower gardens. Planting soil contains organic materials that can smolder for long periods of time before bursting into flame. Keep sturdy ashtrays near designated smoking areas.

GRILLING TIPS

With beautiful weather anticipated for Mother's Day and graduations, here is a quick checklist of barbecue reminders:

- Residents should know the policies for your rental units regarding propane or charcoal barbecues.
- Grills should be placed out from under eaves or overhanging branches and away from the siding or deck railings.
- Before the first use of the season, the barbecue should be tested for gas tank or hose leaks with a light soap and water solution. If the leak stops when the tank or grill is turned off, have the unit serviced by a professional. If the leak does not stop, call the Fire Department at 9-1-1.
- Always have the gas grill lid open before igniting.
- If the flames go out for any reason, turn the grill and gas off for at least 15 minutes before relighting.
- For charcoal grills, make sure the coals are completely cooled before disposing them in a metal container with lid.
- Keep charcoal lighter fluid away from heat sources and out of the reach of children.

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.