

S A F E T Y N O T E S

MAY, 2016



THANK YOU SPOKANE!

Spokane Fire Department appreciates the continued support from the community for maintaining our Emergency Medical Services capability. Thank you for voting YES on our recent Levy!

The week of May 15-21 is also National EMS Week with the 2016 theme of “Called to Care”. This commemoration was first designated in 1973 by President Gerald Ford when Emergency Medical Services was considered a new profession and communities across America were first becoming aware of this critical component of emergency medicine.

Intersection: Arson and Wildland Fires

The first week of May is designated for Arson Awareness by the US Fire Administration and is also used by the USDA Forest Service and National Fire Protection Association as a focus on Wildfire Community Preparedness. There is considerable overlap this year in the main message for communities that live near the “wildland-urban interface” (or WUI). In Spokane, think in terms of any buildings or neighborhoods bordered by pine trees, dried grasses or hillside mixes of vegetation.



The theme for Arson Awareness this year is “Prevent Arson Wildfires” because it underscores data compiled by the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the USDA Forest Service showing that more than half a million wildfires set in 2015 by arsonists resulted in more than \$3 billion in damage.

Research within the past 15 years indicates that small burning embers carried by winds from wildfires that originate at a considerable distance from homes were the immediate cause of many wildland structure losses. With that in mind, the following list of tips may prove helpful when considering both wildfire and arson concerns at your rental properties.

- Keep a fire free zone within 5 feet of the building. Remove firewood stacks and propane tanks.
- Install a fine wire mesh over vent openings into the building where a burning ember could enter.
- Keep gutters and roofs cleared of dry leaves and pine needles.
- Repair damaged shingles and replace missing ones to prevent hot embers from entering under the roof in the event of fire spread coming from wildfire or a neighboring structure.
- Prune branches from trees six to ten feet up from the ground.
- Trim back trees that overhang the roof, decks or balconies.
- Utilize driveways, gravel walkways and well-watered green spaces as fuel breaks.
- Enforce no smoking areas on site.
- Never allow smokers to keep lighters conveniently outside near their ashtrays. Curious young children or mischievous teens can easily access stray lighters near ashtrays or barbecues.
- Never allow a build-up of combustibles on the property. Empty cardboard boxes, dried pine needles or old chairs can become easy ignition sites for anyone wanting to start a fire.
- Install motion-detector lighting to better prevent persons from using hidden areas for fire play or intentional arson.

Review www.firewise.org and <https://disastersafety.org/wildfire/> for additional information on business and home safety.

Luci Lights

While the November 2015 Windstorm and accompanying power outages are still in mind, this may be a good time to research the possibility of adding Luci Lights to your disaster preparedness kit. Luci Lights are inflatable solar-powered lights that can last up to 12 hours on one charge. There are a variety of sizes and shapes on the market with prices starting at \$10.



Some Spokane families found them very helpful during the November power outage. Luci Lights are safer than candles, handier than flashlight batteries, and easily stored.

Storms can bring power outages during the summer months as well. Search the Internet to see whether a Luci Light (originally designed to bring inexpensive light sources to developing countries) might be a good tool for your emergency preparedness bag. They can also be used for outside decorative lights.

You can sign up for this monthly newsletter, ask a fire-related question or suggest a specific safety topic by contacting Mike Miller at mmiller@spokanefire.org or by calling 509.625.7000



Be Sure to visit our website at

spokanefire.org

There you will find links to our blog, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages!

