

## S A F E T Y N O T E S

January, 2017

### Parting Notes from Chief Williams

Over the last 28 years of serving as Spokane's Fire Chief, I have seen first-hand the tragedies that can occur when individuals do not heed basic fire safety messages. As we enter the New Year, please make it a resolution to remember and act on these important fire safety messages that could save your home and/or the lives of your loved ones.

**Make sure you have properly operating smoke alarms!**

I have observed the horrible sight of someone who has died from smoke inhalation and have had to interact with grief-stricken families who did not take the time to make sure they had operating smoke alarms in advance of the fire.

**Remember:** If you cannot afford smoke alarms or have questions about them, call the Spokane Fire Department.

**Make a fire escape plan that includes a meeting place for family members to gather, then practice it!**

I have encountered fire deaths, where victims have not escaped their homes because they had not taken a few moments to make a plan. These incidents are even more heartbreaking when they involve children who have a fire plan and drill at school, but not at home.

**If you must smoke, please do not do so in your home. If you smoke, properly dispose of your smoking materials!**

Smoking related fires are the leading cause of fire deaths in the home. I have seen the results of rapidly developing fires and horrifically burned bodies, when persons on/using oxygen, think it is OK to smoke. Likewise, I have the mind numbing images of the outlines of children in their beds that were created by smoke. These children succumbed to smoke inhalation from fires caused by improper use or disposal of smoking materials by a family member.

The disposal of cigarette butts in plants on apartment balconies, and cigarette butts thrown or dropped from balconies, have destroyed the belongings and lives of many who live in apartments, because of the careless actions of their neighbors who smoke.

**Remember:** While the decision to smoke is up to you, please consider the impact that you have on others if you choose to do so!



## Parting Notes from Chief Williams, Cont'd.

**When you are cooking, please remain attentive. If you have a grease fire, cover it with a lid-- NEVER use water!**

Distractions caused by phone calls, knocks at the door, checking on the kids or getting back to that TV show, create the few seconds necessary for a stove fire to violently erupt. I have been in countless numbers of kitchens destroyed by fire, and have seen too many burns from grease. These fires could have easily been prevented.

**Remember:** Cooking fires are the leading cause of fires in the home!

**Use heating devices properly. Keep combustibles away from heating devices, and don't overload circuits!**

While there is nothing worse than being cold in our homes, it is also devastating to see a home destroyed or a life lost, because residents didn't use common sense while trying to heat their home. Fires associated with heating are the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of fire deaths in the home!

**Remember:** Follow manufacturer's instructions when using heating devices. Maintain at least three feet between heaters and combustible materials. Many older home's electrical systems do not have the capacity for multiple portable heaters which can quickly overload circuits, resulting in a fire.

Although I am stepping away from my day-to-day responsibilities in the fire service, I plead with you to consider taking immediate action and personal responsibility to insure that you and your family follow these fire safety steps, so I am not reading about another Fire tragedy in the future. If you have questions or need additional information about any of these critical life safety messages, please contact the Spokane Fire Department. Best Wishes for a Safe 2017! *Chief Bobby Williams*

## HOLIDAY TREE REMOVAL

Dried trees that are exposed to the smallest ignition source can quickly turn disastrous for you and your family. Did you know that the City of Spokane offers a free Christmas tree pick up service for City of Spokane residents? Christmas tree pick up will occur December 26th through January 13th.

- Have your tree out by 7:00am in your collection area.
- Fresh cut trees only (no artificial or flocked trees)
- Trees up to six feet in height will be accepted. If you have a taller tree, cut it in half.

Apartment complexes can schedule in advance a one-time, one-location pick up of their residents' trees. Call **509.625.7878** for more information.



You can sign up for this monthly newsletter, ask a fire-related question or suggest a specific safety topic by contacting Jamie McIntyre at [jmcintyre@spokanefire.org](mailto:jmcintyre@spokanefire.org) or by calling 509.625.7058



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