



OPERATION: STOCKING Stuffer Toy Drive



Share The Joy, Share A Toy!

The Houston Fire Department will be collecting toys to help make this holiday season a joyous one for disadvantaged children in the Houston area.

Between December 2-20, you can drop a new, unwrapped toy by any of our HFD Fire Stations.



Join the Houston Fire Department and KPRC Local 2 for the Operation Stocking Stuffer Kick-Off December 2, 2011, 6:00am-6:00pm HFD Fire Station 2 5880 Woodway, Houston, Texas 77057 (between Chimney Rock and Augusta)

Bring a toy to Fire Station 2 the morning of the Kick-Off and receive a free Blue Bell Ice Cream* and a free breakfast taco from Los Cucos* while supplies last

For a complete list of fire stations, their locations, or for more information please visit www.houstonfire.org or www.click2houston.com.

For information on toy donations call:

HFD Public Affairs 832-394-6636 or e-mail: paul.box@houston.tx.gov

For information on the Great Toy Giveaway, call

The Operation Stocking Stuffer Hotline at 832-394-6632

Due to the tremendous demand for toys, we cannot accept any clothing donations.



Civic Safety Chain

Fall 2011

Community Newsletter produced by the Houston Fire Department

HFD UNVEILS NEW BILLBOARD CAMPAIGN!

“Smoke Detectors Save Lives!”

That is the theme of a new billboard campaign, unveiled in October, formed from a partnership between the Houston Fire Department (HFD), State Farm Insurance and Clear Channel Outdoor.

Smoke detector awareness has long been a crucial element of the HFD public safety campaigns. For many years now, members of the HFD have installed thousands of free smoke detectors in the homes of our most at-risk residents as a part of the “Get Alarmed Houston!” smoke detector program.

Now, with the help of generous sponsorships from State Farm and Clear Channel Outdoor,

more residents can receive this important message. State Farm donated \$15,000 for printing while Clear Channel Outdoor contributed prime billboard locations around the city.

However, the “Get Alarmed Houston!” smoke detector program would not exist without outside funding. “Get Alarmed Houston!” is funded completely by corporate and private donations.

Over the past five years, CenterPoint Energy has donated \$85 thousand to buy smoke and carbon monoxide detectors for the program.

A smoke detector is one of the most inex-

pensive home security investments anyone can make. In most cases, the entire interior area of an average home can be covered by two or three smoke alarms with a possible total cost of less than twenty dollars.

In 2010 there were 19 accidental, residential fire fatalities in Houston. In 14 (74 percent) of those fatalities, the smoke detectors did not work or there was no smoke detector at all. Studies have shown that up to 75 percent of all fire fatalities are due to smoke inhalation. Statistics like these illustrate why having a working smoke detector is so important.

When seconds count, your small investment may just save your life and the lives of your loved ones!



“A \$5.00 SMOKE DETECTOR SAVED OUR LIVES.”

Install smoke detectors in your home today!

www.HoustonFire.org




Sponsored by

Sample of new Smoke Detector Awareness billboard campaign.

“SAFE HOUSE”

The Houston Fire Department would like to remind parents that we are here to help keep kids safe.

Just as there is a church in every neighborhood to support its residents, there is a fire house nearby when someone feels threatened by a stranger, friend or family member. All fire stations are “Safe Havens” -places for both children and adults to come to if they feel they are in immediate danger (such as being followed by another person or vehicle).

Houston firefighters will make sure the person is okay and contact the local authorities. We encourage parents to tell children that this is a “safe” place they can go to if they are lost or feel they are in danger from a family member, friend or stranger. The firefighters will keep them safe until the parents and police can assist the child.

Parents and guardians should teach their children that strangers are not only people that they have never met, but can be people they don’t know too well. Even if they recognize the person from down the street or from the corner store, the person can still be a stranger who means them harm. Also, every child should know how to call 9-1-1 and ask for help.

Children should have several safe refuges that they can turn to besides a fire station such as a neighbor you trust, a business that you are familiar with or a police station.

Did You Remember To Change Your Smoke Detector Batteries When You Changed Your Clock? If Not...DO IT TODAY!



HFD 2011 Events January-October	
Fire Events	38,653
EMS Events	192,972
Total Events	231,625

HFD 2011 Responses* January-October			
Month	Fire	EMS	Total
Jan.	16,091	28,272	44,363
Feb.	17,096	28,164	45,260
Mar.	16,240	29,821	46,061
Apr.	16,335	29,574	45,909
May	16,974	30,374	47,348
Jun.	16,276	28,849	45,125
Jul.	16,169	29,817	45,986
Aug.	21,983	25,834	47,817
Sep.	21,240	24,287	45,527
Oct.	9,671	36,370	46,041
Total	168,075	291,362	459,437

* A response is number of fire and/or EMS vehicles sent to an event

Residential Fire Fatalities- 18

If your organization would like to receive the free Civic Safety Chain newsletter and other updates from the Houston Fire Department, please e-mail your request to: paul.box@houstontx.gov

For more from the Houston Fire Department, please scan this code or visit: www.houstonfire.org



Home for the Holidays:

Preparing for the holidays is a lot more than grocery shopping.

It’s that time of year again. As we prepare for this holiday season with family and friends, make safety a priority.

Preparing your home for the holidays involves a lot more than just decorating. As the weather cools and we begin to turn on our heaters and furnaces, have you thought to have your heating system inspected? When was the last time it was inspected? Have you tested your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors recently? When was the last time you changed the batteries in these devices? Do you have a fire extinguisher in the house? Will you be burning candles this holiday? Do you have a fire escape plan in place? All these questions you should ask yourself as you get your home ready for your holiday guests.

Safety and security is the best gift you can give your family. It is also one of the least expensive.

Fire Extinguishers-

These are used more commonly in the kitchen. Keep a fully-charged fire extinguisher in your home at all times. Have the right type fire extinguisher (an ABC type works best for most home fires).

Carbon Monoxide- A carbon monoxide detector is another vital security device that can save your life by detecting the amount of CO in the air. Carbon monoxide is a

colorless, odorless gas that can kill before you know it is even in the house. The gas may originate from your furnace, hot water heater, bar-be-cue grill or automobile.

Cooking Safety-

Careless cooking practices are the **number 1** cause of all residential fires! Never leave a stove unattended while cooking. Watch the towels you use. You don’t want to have anything near that could start a fire. Don’t leave small children in the kitchen when preparing your holiday meal.

Candles- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Be sure to have the proper size candle holders for your candles and never burn them near combustible materials like drapes or curtains. Watch where they are located and ensure that younger children can not reach. Don’t burn them more than four hours at a time.

Electrical Outlets-

Electrical problems are the **number 2** cause of all residential fires. **NEVER** overload an outlet. That is a hazard in itself. Be sure to have a power strip. It will shut off if it is on overload.

Christmas Trees-

The HFD recommends that you purchase an artificial,

fire-proof tree but if you buy a real tree, make sure it is as fresh as possible, not brown, no needles falling off etc. Keep the tree properly watered. Put a fresh diagonal cut, about an inch off the bottom, so water will flow through. Place in a secure base and keep water or wet sand in the base or use products designed to keep trees fresh. Make sure the tree is far enough away (at least 3 feet) from any heat source (candles, fireplace etc.) and **NEVER** try to burn the tree yourself in the fireplace for disposal. Dispose of your tree as soon as the season is over because a dried out tree is major fire hazard. If there is a service that will pick up your tree, store your tree away from your home and allow for pick up.

Lights- When you purchase your lights make sure they are UL listed.

When you hang your lights **NEVER** use more than 3 strands on a run (follow manufacturers instructions). Make sure there is no frayed wiring and try to use smaller bulbs with less heat. **NEVER** use the lights when you’re are not at home or when you are asleep. Purchase timers for extra security.



HFD FIRST AID TIP OF THE MONTH-

"Recognizing The Warning Signs of a Heart Attack"

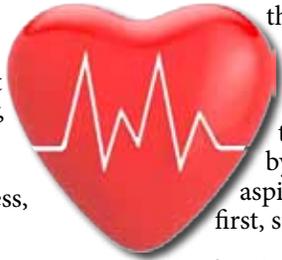
In the U.S., there are approximately 1.5 million heart attacks annually of which an estimated 500 thousand people do not survive. About half of the deaths occur within one hour of the attack so if you know the warning signs of a heart attack and act quickly, the chance of the person surviving the attack increases significantly.

Someone having a heart attack may experience any or all of the following:

- Uncomfortable pressure, fullness or squeezing pain in the center of the chest
- Prolonged pain in the upper abdomen
- Discomfort or pain spreading beyond the chest to the shoulders, neck, jaw, teeth, or one or both arms
- Shortness of breath
- Lightheadedness, dizziness, fainting
- Sweating
- Nausea

A heart attack occurs when an artery supplying your heart with blood and oxygen becomes partially or completely blocked. This loss of blood flow injures or destroys part of your heart muscle. A heart attack generally causes chest pain for more than 15 minutes, but it can also have no symptoms at all.

Many people who experience a heart attack have warning symptoms hours, days or weeks in advance. The earliest warning sign of an attack may be ongoing episodes of chest pain that start when you're physically active, but are relieved by rest.



If you or someone else may be having a heart attack:

- Call 911 or your local emergency medical assistance number.
- Don't tough out the symptoms of a heart attack for more than five minutes. If you don't have access to emergency medical services, have a neighbor or a friend drive you to the nearest hospital.
- Drive yourself only as a last resort, if there are absolutely no other options, and realize that it places you and others at risk when you drive under these circumstances.
- Chew and swallow an aspirin, unless you're allergic to aspirin or have been told by your doctor never to take aspirin. But seek emergency help first, such as calling 911.
- Take nitroglycerin, if prescribed. If you think you're having a heart attack and your doctor has previously prescribed nitroglycerin for you, take it as directed. **Do not** take anyone else's nitroglycerin, because that could put you in more danger.

- **Begin CPR.** If you're with a person who might be having a heart attack and he or she is unconscious, tell the 911 dispatcher or another emergency medical specialist. You may be advised to begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). If you haven't received CPR training, doctors recommend skipping mouth-to-mouth rescue breathing and performing only chest compressions. The dispatcher can instruct you in the proper procedures until help arrives.

Source: www.mayoclinic.com

TALKING TURKEY

TURKEY FRYERS
THAT IS...



With the holiday season fast approaching, the Houston Fire Department would like to remind you of the dangers of cooking with turkey fryers. Turkey fryers can create a delicious holiday treat for your family and friends but without proper precautions, can become a dangerous and deadly disaster. Follow each of these recommended safety tips when using a turkey fryer so you can have a safe and tasty holiday season.

- Turkey fryers are **EXTREMELY DANGEROUS!**
- **ALWAYS** use turkey fryers outdoors away from anything that can burn.
- **ALWAYS** use the fryer outdoors on a level surface to avoid tipping
- **NEVER** use them on wooden decks or in garages
- **NEVER** leave the fryer unattended even for a second
- **NEVER** let children or pets near the fryer
- **The oil will remain dangerously hot hours after use**
- **NEVER** overfill a fryer
- The turkey must be **completely thawed before being placed in the hot oil**
- **Keep an all-purpose fire extinguisher nearby** and use heavy duty pot holders.
- **NEVER** use water to extinguish the fire

You Will Need

• In addition to a completely thawed turkey, you'll need a 40 or 60 quart pot with basket or turkey frying hardware, plus a propane gas tank and burner, a candy/deep fry thermometer, a meat thermometer and lots of oil. Use oils that have a high smoke point, such as corn, peanut or canola oils.

• As far as the turkey itself goes, smaller birds work better for frying. Try not to go over 15 pounds.

Before You Fry- These tips will help to prevent oil overflow

• Before beginning, (and before you even season or marinate your turkey) determine the amount of oil you'll need by placing the turkey in the basket (or on the hanger, depending on the type of fryer you are using) and putting it in the pot. Add water until it reaches about two inches above the turkey. Remove the turkey and note the water level by using a ruler to measure the distance from the top of the pot to the surface of the water. Remove the water and thoroughly dry the pot. Now add enough oil to equal what the water level was without the turkey in the pot.

Remember: There are many local grocery stores and other businesses that prepare fried turkeys so you don't have to. Always practice these and other safe cooking habits.





The Leaves Are Falling & So Are The Temperatures.

Steps you can take to be warm and **safe** in the colder months ahead.

After a long, record-breaking, hot summer, fall has finally arrived and brought relief in the form of cooler temperatures. The unprecedented heat wave has been replaced by cool, crisp evenings and comfortable days. However, as dangerous as the extreme heat conditions were, the cool weather presents its own set of problems that require us to practice a new series of routines to ensure the safety of our loved ones and property.

HEATING YOUR HOME

Every year, the Houston Fire Department responds to hundreds of fires that are caused by space heaters or old, malfunctioning furnaces. As soon as it gets colder outside, we turn on our heaters without much thought of how safe they are. Unsafe heating units,

whether they are small space heaters or complete furnace systems, can cause a deadly fire to happen at any time. The following safety tips will help you keep warm and, **more importantly**, safe over the colder months coming up.

If you have an installed heating system in your home, have it inspected and serviced every year by a licensed professional. They can find serious defects in your system and correct those problems. If you use a space heater there is a simple rule that you should remember before you use it- **"Space Heaters Need Space"**.

• Keep space heaters at least three feet away from any combustible material. That includes drapes, furniture and even walls.

• **NEVER** leave your children alone in a room with a space heater. Also, do not let them move the heater or adjust the controls.

• **NEVER** use extension cords with space heaters and **NEVER** run the heater cords under rugs or carpet. These cords can overheat and start a fire. Check the cord. If the cord is hot unplug it immediately.

• **NEVER** overload the electrical outlets or breakers.

• **ALWAYS** place the space heater on the floor.



• Open-Faced heaters should have a proper screen and grates in place. **NEVER** operate a defective heater.

• Electric heaters permanently installed in the wall or ceiling should have lint and dust removed regularly because they can easily burn. Maintain your heater regularly following manufacturer's recommendations.

• Purchase a heater that has a tip-over shutoff safety switch.

GAS HEATERS

• When using a gas heater, always provide adequate ventilation by opening a window, approximately one inch, to prevent the buildup of carbon monoxide.

• Light the match before turning on the gas. This will prevent the risk of flashback cause by accumulating gas.

• Purchase a carbon monoxide detector if you use a gas heater or fireplace to heat your home.

FIREPLACES

There is nothing like a fire in the fireplace on a cold night.

The crackling of the flames and the warm glow that illuminates the room make an inviting haven to get away from daily stresses of life. A fireplace though, provides its own series of dangers that can be eliminated with proper use and maintenance.

BURN SMART!

• Have your fireplace and chimney inspected and cleaned annually by a certified chimney sweep.

• Minimize creosote buildup in the chimney.

• Make sure your fire fits your fireplace. A fire that burns too hot or is too large can crack your chimney.

• **ALWAYS** use a fireplace screen.

• Clear the area around the fireplace of debris.

• **NEVER** overload the fireplace and **NEVER** use the fireplace to burn trash. It is not an incinerator.

• Keep a fully charged fire extinguisher on hand.

• Check the flue for obstructions like bird's nests and trim any overhanging branches to a minimum of 10 feet away from the chimney.

• **NEVER** leave a fire unattended. Make sure the fire is extinguished before you go to bed.

• Place logs toward the back of the fireplace preferably on a grate.

• Dispose of ashes in covered metal containers placed outside in a non-combustible area.

• Keep your fireplace in good working condition.

• Install and maintain smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Enjoy this cool weather for it doesn't last for long in Houston. It is a perfect time to be outdoors at a festival, a game or other event. But if you get too cold, come in and warm up. Just use these tips and you should make it safely through even the coldest days.

