

HFD Happenings



Camp Houston Fire 2012 was held March 30-April 1st. Camp Houston Fire is a non-profit, long-range Community Outreach and Recruiting tool for promoting interest in young women for the Fire Service. The program was created by women of the Houston Fire Department and designed for Junior and Senior High School girls. The mission is

to encourage strong young women to consider the fire service as a viable career option by eliminating stereotypes, building confidence, and encouraging teamwork among all firefighters. This year, six council districts across the City of Houston were represented by thirty-one strong young women from twenty-one area schools. The cost for each participant to attend Camp Houston Fire in 2012 was approximately \$750. With no costs incurred by the participant. Local businesses, dignitaries, and organizations along with grants provided the necessary funding. This three-day camp exposes the young women to many of the tasks firefighters in Houston experience, including but not limited to: rappelling, forcible entry, search & rescue, Emergency Medical Services, and a live burn. The camp concluded with a graduation ceremony celebrating the young women's achievements and giving them the confidence to return to us as firefighters.



On April 9, 2012, The Houston Fire Department hosted the 8th Annual Houston Firefighters' Charity Golf Classic at Sweetwater Country Club. Thanks to the generous donations from tournament sponsors, silent auction contributors and others, the tournament raised almost \$8,000 for the Houston Firefighters Protection Fund. The protection fund was created in 2006 as a way of "Taking Care of Our Own" by providing emergency medical financial assistance to firefighters and their families should they have to undergo extensive

medical treatment or a prolonged hospital stay due to injury or illness. Contributions to the Firefighters Protection Fund are accepted all year long. If you would like to make a donation to the fund please contact **Paul Box** at **832-394-6636** or by e-mail: **paul.box@houston.tx.gov**.

On April 28, 2012, the Houston Fire Department Valor and Service Awards committee hosted the 19 Annual Medal Day dinner where the brave men and women of HFD were recognized for going above and beyond the call of duty during events of the previous 15 months. Hosted by Len Cannon of KHOU Channel 11, the Medal Day event awarded 80 brave firefighters medals or letters of commendation for their service in stories as diverse as Camp Houston Fire to vehicle extrication to the tragic day care fire in February of 2011. Serving as Keynote Speakers, Captain Darin Unruh and his wife Jill gave an emotion-filled account of his long journey back to the fire station after a fire almost took his life in 2009. The charity event raised thousands of dollars to be used directly to fund this event every year for it is the duty of the Houston Fire Department to honor these brave individuals who have earned this recognition but never ask for it.



HFD Captain Darin Unruh and his wife Jill speak at the 2012 Medal Day Dinner, April 28.



Civic Safety Chain

Spring 2012

Community Newsletter produced by the Houston Fire Department



"Is the Pool Open?"

HFD Encourages Safety In and Around Water

Summer season is almost here. Kids will be out of school and into the pool. But before we enjoy our time in the water, the Houston Fire Department would like to remind you of a sobering statistic. Last year in the City of Houston, 18 children drowned.

Although a majority of the incidents happen backyard and apartment pools, they are not limited to just these areas. Many deaths occurred in bayous, lakes, bathtubs, hot tubs, ponds and other bodies of water.

If you or your children plan to be around the water, these safety tips can prevent a tragedy from happening to your family.

1. **NEVER** leave children alone near water.
2. **ALWAYS** watch your children around ANY body of water.
3. Everyone in your family needs to learn to swim but remember, swim lessons don't make your child "Drown Proof". Take lessons from certified instructors. Swim lessons can begin as early as 1 year.
4. **NEVER** consume alcohol around the water. Even if you don't swim, being impaired by alcohol will lower your awareness and response and may lead to tragedy if there are children in the water.
5. Use approved flotation devices
6. Bring a cell phone to the pool in case of an emergency

7. Pay attention to local weather conditions. If thunderstorms are in the area, get out of the water until the system has passed.

8. LEARN CPR!

9. Teach your kids to:

- Swim with a buddy
- Don't dive into unknown bodies of water. Always enter feet first to avoid hitting your head on the shallow bottom
- Swim in supervised areas only
- Obey all rules and posted signs and **NO** horseplay or running in or around pools

If you own a Pool- Install a security fence around your pool area of at least 4 feet in height. Make sure the fence has a spring-operated, self-closing gate with a working locking latch. Store all pool chemicals out of the reach of children.

If your apartment has a pool- Inspect the fence and gate. If the gate does not lock or you find and other defects with the fence, report it to the apartment management immediately.

Practicing these safety tips should help you and your family have a safe and fun-filled summer.





"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.

The Houston Fire Department: Here for You 24/7

HFD EVENTS JANUARY - MARCH 12, 2012

FIRE	11,026
EMS	60,363
TOTAL	71,389

HFD Contact Information

HFD Headquarters- 832-394-6700
600 Jefferson, 7th Fl, Houston, TX 77002

HFD Records- 832-394-6860
600 Jefferson, 8th Fl., Houston, TX 77002

Request a Smoke Detector
(Qualifications Apply)
832-394-6633 or www.houstonfire.org

Request a Fire Station Visit or Tour
832-394-6633 or www.houstonfire.org

HFD Recruiting- 832-394-6600

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



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



HFD First Aid Tip of the Season

Broken Bones

- Keep the injured limb from moving
- Call 9-1-1 Immediately
- If you suspect multiple broken bones, or the bone is protruding or the neck, back pelvis or thigh may be broken, DO NOT move the person unless they are in immediate danger.
- Apply cold (not ice) packs to minimize swelling
- If a bone is protruding through the skin, DO NOT try to push it back in. Cover it with a dressing and use direct pressure if there is excessive bleeding.

Insect Bites

- Remove stinger if possible by scraping (not pinching)
- Apply a cold compress
- Call 9-1-1 immediately if there are breathing problems or any other reactions

Minor Burns

- Remove person from danger and source of the burn if it is safe to do so
- Cover burned area with cool, wet cloth but do not over cool
- Raised burned arms or legs higher than the person's heart
- DO NOT break blisters or remove burned skin
- DO NOT use butter, ointments or home remedies
- For small burns, immerse in cool water
- Preserve normal body temperature
- Call 9-1-1 immediately for major burns or if condition worsens

see www.houstonfire.org for more safety tips



WORKING SMOKE DETECTORS SAVE LIVES!
IT'S JUST THAT SIMPLE.



Heat Related Emergencies, How You Can Prevent Them!

The Houston Fire Department reminds citizens how they can prevent some of the most common emergency incidents the City sees during the warmer months.

“HEAT EXHAUSTION”

Heat Exhaustion is caused by over exposure to high temperatures usually combined with high humidity and strenuous physical activity. If not treated immediately, heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke which can cause organ failure, brain damage and death.

In most cases, you can treat heat exhaustion yourself by following the tips listed here.

1. Rest in a cool place. Getting into an air-conditioned building is best, but at the least, find a shady spot. Rest on your back with your legs elevated higher than your heart level.
2. Drink cool fluids. Stick to water or sports drinks. Don't drink any beverages that have alcohol or caffeine, either of which can contribute to fluid loss.
3. Apply cool water to your skin. If possible, take a cool shower or soak in a cool bath. Don't use alcohol on your skin.
4. Loosen clothing. Remove any unnecessary clothing and make sure your clothes aren't binding.

If you don't begin to feel better within a half-hour using these treatment measures, seek prompt medical attention. You may be given intravenous (IV) fluids to help you rehydrate. Immersion in cold water, misting your skin, and placing you in front of fans or using cold or ice packs and cooling blankets are some of the techniques that may be used to bring down your body temperature.

TEXTING DISTRACTS.

Houston Fire Department, State Farm Insurance Unveil New Safety Campaign

In an effort to encourage citizens to stay focused on the road, the Houston Fire Department and State Farm Insurance have kicked off a new safety campaign “Texting Distracts – Watch the Road!”.

In 2011, the HFD responded to more than 30 thousand vehicle related accidents, transporting more than 8 thousand individuals to the hospital and reporting more than 30 individuals dead on arrival.

Statistics indicate that distracted driving contributes to as much as 20 percent of all fatal crashes and that cell phone use is the main culprit.

According to a study by the Texas Transportation Institute, texting doubles a driver's reaction time and reports that these drivers were more than 11 times likely to miss a flashing light while texting.

“Just like most fires, the majority of motor

vehicle accidents are preventable,” said Fire Chief Terry Garrison.

“We want to encourage citizens to be safe on the road and remember that distraction can lead to disaster.”

State Farm statistics indicate that drivers who text and drive are six times more likely to get into an accident than drivers who refrain from texting while driving.

These have all been funded by a “2012 State Farm Insurance Good Neighbor Citizenship Grant.” This grant in the amount of \$30,000 was used to purchase the billboard space and the printing of the boards themselves

Clear Channel Outdoor offered the ad-space for 20 eco-posters throughout the city at a greatly reduced price to help promote the safety message “Texting Distracts – Watch the Road!” in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

“Drivers who text and drive are six times more likely to get into an accident....”



City Councilmember Ed Gonzalez (3rd from left), Fire Chief Terry Garrison (2nd from right) along with representatives of State Farm Insurance, the Houston Police Department and Clear Channel Outdoor unveil the new billboard safety campaign “Texting Distracts”.

HOME SAFETY CHECK LIST

Smoke detector(s) present?
Working?

Date of last battery change:
___/___/___

Carbon Monoxide Detector(s)
present? Working?

Date of last battery change:
___/___/___



Kitchen Issues:

- Rangetop and oven are clean of grease & debris?
- Pot handles properly positioned when cooking?
- Barbeque grills in use?
- Grills always used outside?
- Grills are supervised at all times when in use?
- If gas grill, have the gas lines been checked for leaks?
- Propane properly stored?

Other Fire Safety Issues:

- Does the resident smoke?
- Ashtrays emptied regularly?
- Are matches/lighters put away out of childrens' reach?
- Is there smoking in the bedroom?
- Does the home have burglar bars?
- Do they have a lever release?
- Key- Place key near bars to make it easier to find and use in case of an emergency.

- If burglar bars are bolted (no release mechanism) are there two ways out of each room and the home?
- Are exits easily accessible and free of debris and clutter?
- Candles present?
- Candles being used properly (proper candle holders, not left burning etc.)?
- Fire extinguisher present?
- Date of last extinguisher inspection: ___/___/___
- Fire extinguisher fully charged?
- Proper type of fire extinguisher?
- Is resident capable of using fire extinguisher?
- Extension cords being used properly (not placed under rugs, near wet areas etc.)

Storage Issues:

- Flammable materials stored properly?
- Are flammable materials stored too close to water heater?

“E.D.I.T.H.”

Exit Drills In The Home

Not only do you need working smoke detectors, but you need to create and practice an escape plan in case there is a fire in your home. Every member of your family should practice the escape plan so they know where to go and what to do in the event of a fire.

Have Your Family Ready In Case Of A Fire-

Does Your Family Have An Escape Plan?

- Designate a meeting place outside your home so you will know everyone got out ok
- Teach your children how to dial 9-1-1
- Make sure your children know their home address and phone number
- Plan to go to a neighbor's home to call 9-1-1
- Practice your escape plan and a fire drill every month
- Check your smoke alarm every month
- Make sure your address is VISIBLE!

Know 2 Ways Out!-

- Out of your room
- Out of your home
- On a separate sheet of paper have your children draw 2 ways out of their room and home and complete the following information: Home address, home phone.

In Case Of Fire-

• GET OUT FAST AND STAY OUT!

- Remember your 2 WAYS OUT!
- Meet at your designated meeting place
- Go to your neighbor's house and call 9-1-1
- Remain calm and tell the 9-1-1 operator your name, address of the fire your phone number and details of the fire



DID YOU KNOW? 30% of Houston Homes Do Not Have a Working Smoke Detector? *

*information based on residential fires HFD has responded to 2010-2011.