

Parish Safety Committee Newsletter

Fire Safety

Since October is fire prevention month and the start of home heating season, this issue of the PSC newsletter is devoted to fire & heating safety.

It comes around every year. Since 1920, when President Woodrow Wilson first proclaimed it, Americans observe National Fire Prevention Day on Oct. 9. Since 1922, the week that includes Oct. 9, Sunday through Saturday, has been observed as Fire Prevention Week.

The Fire Prevention Week observance was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire that began on October 8, but continued into, and did most of its damage on, October 9, 1871. The fire killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres. According to popular legend, the fire broke out after a cow belonging to a Mrs. Catherine O'Leary, kicked over a lamp and started a fire that spread from the barn to the whole city.

This year's Fire Prevention topic sponsored by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) will concentrate on preventing fires that start in the kitchen. "Prevent Cooking Fires: **Watch What You Heat**" is the theme for this year's event.

A majority of reported home fires, three in ten, start in the kitchen, more than in any other room or area in the home. Kitchen fire prevention is just as important in cafeterias and restaurants. Here are a few basic tips from the NFPA for preventing cooking fires:

- Never leave your stove unattended.
- Keep young children away from cooking areas.
- Keep your cooking area clean and uncluttered.
- Avoid wearing loose or dangling clothing around the stove's burners.
- Plug microwaves directly into an outlet, not into an extension cord.

Home Heating

Checking Your Furnace Can Prevent Poisoning

Each fall and winter there are persons who become extremely ill from an invisible danger. This is a type of poisoning, which can cause death. It lurks in faulty furnaces and other aging devices and stoves.

The heating season brings in a serious killer. The cause an odorless, colorless gas called carbon monoxide. Common symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are headaches, and sometimes a sluggish feeling that seems to improve when the person gets to fresh air.

There are good ways to prevent carbon monoxide dangers in heating systems, and the best time to do it is before the heat is turned on each fall. The rule is, "don't put it off". The heating system in a home is the prime cause of fires in residences and is the second most common cause of deaths because of fires, according to nationwide research. Here are some suggestions:

- Clean and replace furnace filters regularly, and check them monthly throughout the heating season.
- Make sure there is plenty of fresh air available in the home by keeping windows partially open at all times to prevent carbon monoxide build-up.
- Have your chimney or vent inspected before the heating season. Malfunctioning furnace vents or chimneys that have become clogged are common causes of CO poisoning. They should be checked periodically, particularly after the summer, when animals and birds may have used them as nests.
- Don't give gas time to accumulate when lighting the burner.

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*Your Parish Safety Committee
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- Use proper fuel for the heater designed for oil or kerosene. Note that fuel expands as it gets warm.
- Never leave a fireplace fire unattended.

Precautions for Electric Heaters:

- Do not use an extension cord unless it is heavy duty (cord must rate as high as the current rating listed on the heater).
- Make sure that the heater has an automatic cut off switch in the event that the heater is accidentally tipped over.
- Avoid touching electric heater if your body has been previously in contact with water and has not had the opportunity to dry.
- Avoid using electric heaters in bathrooms

Precautions for Wood Burning Stoves:

- The wood-burning stove, as well as the surrounding area, need to be clean and well ventilated.
- The stove cannot be safely used if it has parts that are broken or defective. The same is true if cracks are discovered in the stove.
- Stoves should be placed only on non-combustible floors and surfaces. Use the proper stove board to serve as a fire- proof barrier that will not support combustion of the material underneath.
- Be sure all ashes have been thoroughly cooled prior to disposal.
- Wood or coal-burning stoves should be at least a 36 inches away from walls or furniture

Time Change means it is time to Change Batteries in Home Smoke Alarms

Each time you change the clock back to standard time in the fall, also change the batteries in your household smoke detectors. Be sure to check flashlight and battery sets in the portable radio at the same time.

Remember Prevention & these tools are your keys to safety.



Parish Safety Committee Functions Include:

- ❖ Safety inspections
- ❖ Investigate safety incidents, accidents etc.
- ❖ Evaluate safety programs
- ❖ Establish safety programs
- ❖ Provide safety training

Everyone is invited to participate in our Safety Program. Please feel free to contact anyone on the Safety Committee for additional information.



School is in session Please Drive Safely!

Please use caution when driving around and especially in back of the school building.



Remember

*If you have an idea to make it safer
Please pass it along.*

Safety First / Environment Always

10/06

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