



Frontline

Westerville Division of Fire Newsletter

Station 111
400 W. Main Street

Station 112
727 E. Schrock Road

Station 113
355 N. Spring Road

Emergencies
9-1-1

Non-emergencies
(614) 882-2213

Holiday Safety Tips to Reduce Fire Risk

Decorating homes and businesses is a long-standing tradition around the holiday season. Unfortunately, these same decorations may increase your chances of fire. By following a few simple fire safety tips, you can keep electric lights, candles and holiday trees from causing a holiday hazard.

Keep Trees Watered

Holiday trees account for hundreds of fires annually in the United States. Often, shorts in electrical lights or open flames from candles start tree fires. If you have a live tree, keep it well-watered at all times. Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited if it meets a flame.

Maintain Holiday Lights

Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, broken or cracked sockets and excessive wear. Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Periodically check the wires: they should not be warm to the touch. During installation, your personal safety is also very important. Always have someone else working with you to foot the ladder when hanging outdoor lights or decorations. Also, stay centered between the rails of the ladder and do not overreach to hang lights or decorations.



Never stand on the top two rungs of the ladder.

Keep Exits Open and Unblocked

Ensure trees and other holiday decorations do not block an exit way. A blocked entry/exit way puts you and your family at risk if a quick exit is required.

No Wrapping Paper in the Fireplace

Loose wrapping paper burns quickly and may result in flying paper embers being released into the chimney, which can result in a chimney fire. These embers can also move to the roof, which can cause a roof or attic fire. Also, any paper that has a glossy coating, such as wrapping paper and magazines, use synthetic inks and metal-based foils, which may release toxic material into the air when burned.

Never Leave Candles Unattended

Candles are popular during the holidays, but left unattended can be a fire hazard. Consider using battery-operated flameless candles, which look and operate like real candles. If you do use lit candles, ensure they are in stable holders and

place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. It's best to keep candles at least 12 inches from anything that can burn. Avoid using candles in bedrooms and sleeping areas.



Chief Ingles

Visible House Numbers Key to Quick Arrivals

Firefighters pride themselves on knowing streets and addresses in their district. However, even a veteran firefighter can be occasionally challenged by an address. In the past, Westerville firefighters used large map books to assist in locating an address. Although we still carry the books on our trucks, the fire department takes advantage of new technology, currently using GIS mapping to help quickly find the location of an emergency.

A computer mounted in each vehicle shows the exact location of a building, as well as fire hydrants and any known hazards or dangers that may exist at that location. Based on the address search on the map, the driver can be guided to the destination. This system is highly accurate and consistently updated to include new homes and addresses.

Even though we are using computerized maps, visible house numbers are important for a quick reference. House numbers should be easy to find and easy to read; at least four inches high and in a contrasting color to the house or mailbox. A light that illuminates the number at night is also helpful. Fancy numbers or numbers that are spelled out might be aesthetically pleasing, but are challenging to read from the street. Additionally, numbers are useless if they can't be seen so make sure they are not obscured by trees or shrubs.

If your home is set back from the street, the number should be displayed on a gate post, fence, mailbox or other appropriate place that is visible from the street from any direction. If your home is located on a corner, your house number should face the street named in your address.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Each October, the doors of each of the three fire stations in Westerville are open for visitors in recognition of Fire Prevention Week. While station tours occur each week of the year, this is a special occasion to give visitors a glimpse of a day in the life of firefighters.

Firefighters' "living quarters" are always popular on tours, and generate curiosity about how professional firefighters work and live together during their 24-hour shifts.

A total of 94 full and part-time men and women serve on one of three units over the course of the week in Westerville. Because they operate on the 24-hour on-duty/48-hour off-duty schedule, their on-duty time naturally involves activities of daily living.

One of the unique aspects of this profession is shared meals during on-duty shifts. Fire houses are traditionally equipped with a kitchen, although food is not provided. Typically, staff combine contributions at the beginning of their shifts, and plan meals for that day as a group.

Like we do at home, it is common practice among firefighters to shop for and prepare meals. The difference, of course, is that they remain on-duty and must be prepared to respond to an emergency at any time, including in the middle of a meal.

They are also permitted to visit grocery stores for their supplies. Because they are assigned to and must remain with their vehicles, the public may see a fire truck* parked at a local grocery store.

Firefighters may also buy their lunch on-the-go if training or emergency calls have limited time to prepare for or shop for groceries.

Quick response times and professional fire and emergency medical services are the top priorities for the men and women who serve Westerville and Blenden Township. Similar to the unique nature of intermittent sleep patterns while on-duty, meal preparation (and interruptions) is another factor that makes a day in the life of a firefighter unique.

**Due to health regulations, smaller EMS/medic vehicles may not be used to transport food or grocery items. These vehicles are required to remain in station, at-the-ready for the transport of patients.*

Division NEWS



Brian Miller Named Deputy Chief

Brian Miller has been promoted to Deputy Chief of the Division of Fire. Miller has been with the Division for 14 years. He began as a part-time firefighter in 1999 and became full-time in 2000. Most recently, he served as Chief Fire Marshal, where he supervised the Fire Prevention Bureau. Miller will be in charge of division operations in his new position.

Brian Miller was sworn-in as Deputy Chief on November 4, 2013



L111 returned to Station 111 in late October following refurbishment

Welcome Home Ladder 111

Ladder 111 (L111) recently returned home to Westerville after a yearlong refurbishment, which required the rebuilding of its transmission, engine, pump and generator. L111, a 1998 Pierce Dash, was returned to Pierce Manufacturing in Appleton, Wisconsin for refurbishment. It was also updated with a seatbelt monitoring system for firefighter safety, a backup camera and traffic signaling bar in the rear of the truck as well as all new LED lighting.

The division uses refurbishment as part of the fleet management program, allowing extended life of certain vehicles and resulting in significant savings when compared to the purchase of new vehicles. L111 was refurbished at half the cost of the purchase of a new ladder truck. During this time, the Fire Division responded using a ladder truck on loan from Columbus Fire, which was returned to the City of Columbus in late October.

Fill the Boot: Westerville Firefighters Help MDA

The annual Fill the Boot campaign is a charitable event benefiting the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). Last August, Westerville Professional Firefighters International Association of Firefighters Local 3480 raised more than \$9,300 for the association. Across the U.S. and Canada, a total of \$26.1 million was raised for the cause. For more information on this program, please visit <http://www.iaff.org/MDA/history.asp>.

Winter Safety

Slips, trips and falls can easily happen on wet and icy walkways and are common causes for injuries in the winter. Help us keep sidewalks clear after a snowfall. For more information, visit www.westerville.org/snow.



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WITH WESTERVILLE

