Fire Prevention Week: “Don’t Wait, Check the Date!”

It’s that time of year again! Fire Prevention Week will be October 9-15, and the Westerville Division of Fire will host a variety of public education efforts and events to help promote the importance of properly functioning smoke alarms.

This year’s Fire Prevention Week campaign is “Don’t Wait, Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years.” The message is the last of a three-year campaign from the National Fire Prevention Association’s (NFPA) public outreach to focus on the role of smoke alarms in saving lives by alerting people to smoke and fire.

NFPA adopted this three-year effort based on survey data that shows the public has many misconceptions about smoke alarms which may put them at increased risk in the event of a home fire. And, the WFD firefighters and officials see this everyday.

One example is that only a small percentage of people know how old their smoke alarms are, or how often they need to be replaced. People also tend to ignore warning signs that smoke alarm batteries or the unit itself is overdue for replacement.

As a result, NFPA promotes these key messages:

• Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years.
• Make sure you know how old the smoke alarms are in your home.
• Find out how old a smoke alarm is by looking at the date of manufacture on the back of the alarm; the alarm should be replaced 10 years from that date.

WFD also promotes the seasonal message during “Spring Forward” and “Fall Back” time changes. The idea is simple: Change your clock. Change your (smoke alarm) batteries.

“It’s really important that we work with the community to remember these key ideas,” said Chief Fire Marshal David Williams. “A majority of house fires tend to happen overnight, when families are asleep. It’s so important to remember that functional smoke alarms will save lives if used correctly.”

Reasons to Attend WFD’s Fire Prevention Open House

WFD will again host its annual family-friendly Fire Prevention Week Open House on **Sunday, October 9 from 1-4 p.m.** at all three fire houses. Here are the Top 5 not-to-miss activities.

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<th>TOP 5</th>
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<td><strong>TOUCH-A-TRUCK</strong> All vehicles (not in service) will be on display at all three fire houses. Get hands-on with the Ladder truck, Rescue Engine and medic vehicles.</td>
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<td><strong>DEMOSNTRATIONS</strong> Watch as firefighters, rescue technicians and paramedics cut apart a vehicle as they would in a real accident extraction. See the “Jaws of Life” in action. Learn how to properly operate an extinguisher on a fire simulator.</td>
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<td><strong>TOUR THE STATIONS</strong> In addition to the vehicles, you can see firefighters’ living quarters, training rooms and more! Learn how the men and women of WFD live while on 24-hour duty.</td>
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<td><strong>MEET AND GREET</strong> This is the best time of the year to meet and get to know the men and women of the Westerville Division of Fire. Learn about our dual roles as firefighters and medics.</td>
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<td><strong>SAFETY BUNCH SHOW</strong> Through a series of safety skits, this fun show features WFD’s very own puppet troupe, “The Safety Bunch.” Learn important safety messages, including how to be “fire safe” at home and what to do in case of a fire.</td>
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Every American was impacted by the horror of September 11, 2001. For fire service professionals, the feelings of reflection and loss are intense, as we remember the men and women of the Fire Division of New York and other agencies who died responding to emergency calls coming from the World Trade Center towers.

If you were unable to attend the Westerville 9/11 Memorial Observance, the theme was “Answering the Call, Keeping the Calm.” The focus this year was the critical role emergency dispatchers have during a crisis.

If you’ve ever had to call 9-1-1, chances are you were in a panic or a heightened state of worry or concern. You’ve also likely heard 9-1-1 audio re-broadcast on the news or television show. Think for a moment about the calm during the crisis. These emergency responders are charged with getting important, life-saving information in the most difficult of circumstances. They must then turn into a master coordinator, sending people and equipment to a scene and directing a constant stream of radio traffic.

At the 9/11 Memorial, a now-retired FDNY dispatcher talked about the heavy responsibility of managing the cries for help that day. Chris Carver, a native of Central Ohio, said no one had to call him back to work that Tuesday morning. When he heard the endless sirens, he went back and began the insurmountable task of answering the call and endeavoring to keep the calm. Like us, Chris will be forever impacted by that day.

Firefighters, medics and police officers would be unable to do our jobs well without the guidance and direction of the men and women in our emergency communications division. They are true professionals who take seriously their commitment to the community’s safety.

I’m proud of the efforts we make each day as a team, and thank the professional dispatchers who help us each day by answering the call.

The Westerville Division of Fire is proud to introduce Engine 112, a 2016 Sutphen Monarch cab with a 750-gallon tank and a powerful pump with Class-A foam (used for fire suppression). Crews began training and operating the new apparatus in late September. Look for the new truck to be on display during Fire Prevention Week Open House at Station 112 (727 E. Schrock Road).

Don’t Wait —
Check the Date!
Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years

Fire Prevention Week
Age matters when it comes to your smoke alarms.
Check the manufacture dates on your smoke alarms today!

1. Remove the smoke alarm from the wall or ceiling.
2. Look at the back of the alarm for the date of manufacture.
3. Smoke alarms should be replaced 10 years from the date of manufacture.
4. Put the alarm back on the ceiling or wall if it is less than 10 years old.

A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat and fire.
Test smoke alarms at least once a month by pushing the test button.

If the smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside. Go to your outside meeting place.
Call the fire department from a cellphone or a neighbor’s phone. Stay outside until the fire department says it’s safe to go back inside.

For more information about smoke alarms, visit usa.fema.gov and firepreventionweek.org.

Infograph courtesy of the National Fire Prevention Association

NOTE: Beginning in 2017, Frontline will be distributed by edition number. This timeline may be more or less frequent than by quarter.