



Frontline

Westerville Division of Fire Newsletter

No. 1 2017

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) 901-6600

Simple Life-Saving Steps in Fire Prevention

October is Fire Prevention Month in the fire service, and a great time of year to think about life-saving strategies in your home should a fire occur from cooking, faulty wiring, storm damage or an accident. Some of these reasons, of course, are beyond our control, but others are certainly preventable.

Cooking Safety

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), cooking fires are the leading cause of home fires and home injuries. The main reason: unattended cooking in the kitchen.

If you're cooking, stay in the kitchen or near the location (grill, stovetop) where the food is simmering, boiling or baking. Anything nearby can catch fire, so clear the way of packaging or utensils. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby as well. It's a good practice to have one under the sink or in another handy place within reach. Remember the old lesson from Home Ec: never put water on a grease fire. Douse it with a fire extinguisher or smother it to remove the oxygen. Turn OFF the heat source in any instance of fire.

Never cook when you're tired or distracted. The risk of harming

yourself or your personal property greatly increases if you dose off while cooking.

Check Smoke Detectors

Smoke detectors save lives only when they work properly. Please test them once a month and understand they need to be replaced every 10 years. These devices are so important because they alert people to smoke and fire, which is critical especially in the event a house fire occurs overnight.

NFPA survey data shows the public has misconceptions about smoke alarms. WFD firefighters see this regularly. One example is that only a small percentage of people know how old their smoke alarms are, or the 10-year replacement schedule rule. People also tend to ignore warning signs that smoke alarm batteries or the unit itself is overdue for replacement.

Make sure you know how old the smoke alarms are in your home. To find out how old a smoke alarm is, look at the date of manufacture on the back.

If you have questions about your device or you are in need of a working smoke detector, please contact WFD at (614) 901-6600. For more information, visit us online at www.westerville.org/fire.



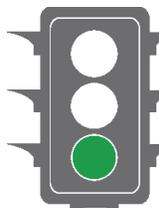
Minimize fire risk with a clear dryer vent

According to the National Fire Prevention Association, firefighters in the United States respond to thousands of home structure fires involving clothes dryers each year. The leading cause of these fires is failure to keep machines clean of lint, a highly-combustible collection of tiny fibers and debris released during the drying cycle.

"Most people don't realize the fire risk associated with their dryer vent system," said Westerville Fire Chief Brian Miller. "These fires can happen quickly and are unnerving because they occur under the cover of the ventilation system. In most cases, you won't know it's happening until it's far too late. That's why prevention is key."

While most lint is trapped in the machine's removable filter, the rest is carried by moist air into the vent system where it can accumulate and cause a blockage. This compromises the venting system greatly and can lead to overheating and fire.

Residents should be careful to follow the manufacturer's suggestions for use and consider the use of a professional service ventilation system.

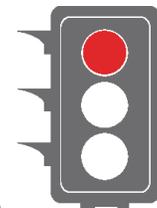


--Have the dryer professionally installed and serviced.

--Use only metal ducting designed specifically for dryers to vent the exhaust outside.

--Keep the area around the dryer free of items that can burn.

--Turn off the dryer before sleeping or leaving the house.



--Dry anything containing foam, rubber or plastic. A rug with a rubber backing is one example.

--Place items that have come into contact with anything flammable like alcohol, cooking oils or gasoline in a clothes dryer. Dry them outdoors or in a well-ventilated room.

--Continue to reset the electric panel breaker if the breaker trips frequently while operating your dryer or any other appliance. Stop using the dryer, unplug it and call a qualified electrician or appliance repair company.

do

don't

Tornado Tops County Disaster Risk Assessment



Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (FCEM&HS) is one of the agencies in our region responsible for planning and implementing measures to respond to natural and man-made disasters.

Part of that planning effort is the annual publication of the Franklin County Risk Assessment, a detailed study of the hazards most likely to impact Franklin County. The report lists 19 threats and hazards - dangerous events such as winter storms, floods and terrorist attacks - ranked according to the potential risk they pose to the County.

Helping Communities Prepare

This assessment also prepares community leaders for crisis management strategies to mitigate the risks these threats and hazards pose.

"Our community and region are ever changing and this edition of the Risk Assessment provides information for local officials to understand and plan for the risks their community faces," said Jeffrey J. Young, Director, Franklin County Emergency Management & Homeland Security.

The Top 10

According to FCEM&HS, the top 10 (out of 19 published) threats for Central Ohio are:

1. Tornado
2. Cyber Threat
3. Infectious Disease
4. Flooding
5. Lone Wolf Terrorist Attack
6. Dam Failure
7. Utility/Energy Interruption or Failure
8. Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or Explosive (CBRNE) Terrorist Incident
9. Severe Winter Weather
10. Hazardous Materials Incidents

For more information, see the 2016 Franklin County Risk Assessment Executive Summary available online at <http://fcmhs.com>.

Information is Power!

WFD believes information is power. This list is provided for that purpose, not to provoke fear. There is more you can learn about tornado safety and risk reduction for any threat online at www.ready.gov.

Fire Prevention WEEK



The Westerville Division of Fire joins the National Fire Prevention Association in encouraging residents to create and practice a plan for escaping their homes in case of a fire.

"Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out!" is the theme for this year's Fire Prevention Week, which lasts from Sunday, October 8

to Saturday, October 14. Westerville's main fire station, Station 111, located at 400 W. Main St., will host a Fire Prevention Week Open House on Sunday, October 8 from 1-4 p.m. Fire experts will demonstrate various types of recommended fire alarms and how to clean bathroom exhaust fans, among other family-friendly activities.

"We use Fire Prevention Week as a way to invite residents to come see the fire houses, the equipment and the firefighters working for them every day," said Chief Fire Marshal David Williams.

Chief Williams says it's important for residents to have a plan in case the worst happens. He encourages people to keep the unexpected in mind when planning. "Most people exit and enter their homes from the same door every day," he said. "You need to keep in mind your alternative exits in case your main exits are blocked." All members of the family should practice the escape plan.

"It's extremely important for children to know how to execute the escape plan, especially if something happens and you become separated. It can make all the difference."

For more information about Fire Prevention Week and important fire prevention tips, visit www.westerville.org/fire.

Chief's Message: Bathroom Exhaust Fans Start Fires



The Westerville community suffered a loss last month with a fatal fire that resulted in the death of a 17-year-old Westerville student. Amid all the lessons we must learn from this tragedy, please continue to be mindful of the condition of your smoke detectors. If your detectors are 10 years old or older, they need to be replaced. And it's a good practice to replace your batteries every six months.

One of the most common causes of fires right now in Westerville is bathroom exhaust fans. The fans are good for their purpose: preventing steamed mirrors, damp walls and fogged windows along with removing odors, but they are also a major fire hazard. We're finding these fans are most often dirty (dusty) and simply overheat by being on for too long.

There are two easy steps you can take to prevent these fires. First, get your fan cleaned or replaced. If it's an older fan, have a certified electrician replace the fan rather than clean it. Second, when you leave the bathroom, turn the fan off. Don't operate the fan when someone is not physically present in the room. If you smell smoke, call 9-1-1. If you have questions about bathroom exhaust fan safety, come visit us at our Fire Prevention Week Open House on Sunday, October 8 and we will show demonstrations and discuss safety tips in detail.



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