



Minnesota Fire Safety Educator

A Resource for Fire Safety Educators
From the Minnesota State Fire Marshal Division

January 2016
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Winter Fire Safety

While we are into January and celebrating a new year, winter hazards continue to be a safety concern. Data show us that people are at greater risk of a residential fire in the winter season and the National Fire Protection Association and U.S. Fire Administration have teamed up to promote "Put a Freeze on Winter Fires." This annual campaign, now in its fifth year, provides safety messages and tips for fire prevention educators to share with the public.

Each week in January and February, USFA will share tips and information that you can share through social media to help make our communities safer. Follow #wintersafety on Twitter at @usfire and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/usfire.

For additional fire safety and prevention information visit the [USFA](#) and [NFPA](#) websites.

Wrapping up the Holidays

Now that Christmas is over and holiday celebrations are winding down, it is time to remind residents of the dangers of leaving up those Christmas trees too long. NFPA statistics show that almost 40 percent of home fires that begin with a Christmas tree happen in the month of January. While a Christmas tree fire isn't common, they do tend to be more serious. NFPA reports that one out of every 31 home fires with a Christmas tree is fatal. In comparison, deaths occur in one out of every 144 residential fires.

To help in your efforts to get the message out about the dangers of a dry Christmas tree, NFPA has released a [news release](#) for you to share.

Last January, national headlines were made when a Maryland couple and four of their grandchildren died in a home fire fueled by an extremely dry 15-foot Christmas tree, set to be removed the next day. In August, [the report on the fire](#) was released from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives along with the Anne Arundel County Fire Department. The report shows the family had a monitored automatic fire alarm system which was functioning but still did not save the family. The home was not equipped with residential sprinklers. [The report](#) gives insight into the intensity of the Christmas tree fueled fire.

You can also find social media messages and images to share on the [USFA website](#) along with additional resources.

Like Us and Follow Us

Hopefully you and your fire department already follow the State Fire Marshal Division on Twitter and like us on Facebook. If not, now is a great time to do so! Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Communications staff are regularly updating social media with safety messages and other information you can use. By following our social media you can share content or use ideas to create your own content for social media. Since fire departments do much more than fight fires, you may also want to subscribe to the [Department of Public Safety YouTube channel](#) for great videos from the State Fire Marshal, Minnesota State Patrol and other DPS divisions.

[Minnesota State Fire Marshal on Facebook](#)

[Minnesota State Fire Marshal on Twitter](#)

[Minnesota Department of Public Safety on Facebook](#)

[Minnesota Department of Public Safety on Twitter](#)

Do you have a recent sprinkler save, smoke alarm save or other interesting fire prevention story? Let us know. We are always looking for content to share on our social media.

Building Effective and Engaging Presentations

The USFA and NFPA recently presented a webinar on “Building Effective and Engaging Presentations,” which provided instruction on four keys to creating an effective presentation.

The presenter, NFPA Senior Project Manager Karen Berard-Reed, walks listeners through the strategies of outcomes, clarity, enthusiasm and engagement. As educators we ultimately want the greatest impact on our audience in order to change the attitudes and behavior toward safety.

If you missed the original presentation you [view the archived version](#).

Minnesota Safety Council

The Minnesota Safety Council recently published the January 2016 edition of the *Memo To Members* newsletter. The most recent edition covers topics from the Minnesota Safety and Health Conference to the training schedule for the Safety Council.

The Governor’s Safety Award is presented each year during the conference. The award recognizes Minnesota employers for excellence in safety. To apply, your organization must provide injury data along with the Safety Program Evaluation Scorecard. The scorecard measures progress in implementing a comprehensive safety program. All application materials are kept confidential. The application will open on Jan. 5. If your organization is interested in applying, visit the [Minnesota Safety Council website](#).

The Minnesota Safety and Health Conference will be held on May 3-5 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. During the three-day conference, hear from speakers on safety topics including managing safety programs, behavior based on a budget, active shooter and legally effective incident management. The detailed conference program will be available online the week of Jan. 25.

If you are interested in reading the entire January newsletter it can be found on the [Minnesota Safety Council website](#).

Campus Fire Safety

Campus Firewatch continues its monthly themes to promote campus fire safety. January's themes are: Electrical and What to Look For in Off-campus Housing. Each month Campus Firewatch posts a theme with resources and data to help schools and communities engage students on fire safety topics. The resources can be found on the [Campus Firewatch website](#) under resources.

ABC News recently also covered a story on the living conditions in college rental homes in the Boston and Philadelphia areas. The segment highlights not only health concerns in many of these off-campus homes but serious fire safety risks. The video is available on the [ABC News website](#).

Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Public Education

The dates for the 2016 Chiefs Public Education Committee have been set. The Minnesota Fire and Injury Prevention group has decided to join together as part of the Chiefs Public Education Committee. Many topics were covered by both groups so it was decided at both the last Chiefs Pub Ed and MNFIP meetings to work together. If there are any concerns about hosting these meeting together please let us know. I hope everyone will be able to join us for the next meeting.

Feb. 10: 1 p.m. in Savage

May 11: 1 p.m. in Excelsior

Aug. 10: 1 p.m. (looking for host/location)

November: 1 p.m. (Date not yet determined. Looking for host/location)

Winter Driving

With most of Minnesota now blanketed in snow, it is important to think about winter driving safety. Below is a message passed along from Fire Chief Judy Thill with some winter driving reminders.

It is that time of year when driving conditions get bad. Please [share this video](#) with all of your personnel and ask them to take a few minutes to watch it — closely — and to the end.

In all of the videos I have seen and used in training, this is probably one of the scariest for both victims and responders. There are multiple crashes at the same scene and lots of people on foot.

Some basic reminders to go with the video:

1. Always be aware of your surroundings. If there is no cable barrier, jersey barrier or metal rail in the median of a highway you are working on, you have traffic that can come at you from both directions.
2. Try and free up someone at every scene to watch traffic and act as a lookout (both directions?).
3. Give LOTS of advanced warning to keep slowing people down more and more as they approach your scene (both directions?).
4. While many people have gotten the message to slow down and move over, others just don't care enough or think anything will happen to them.
5. Please keep this video in mind when you are driving and show it to your family and friends reminding all to pay attention and slow (way) down when they see flashing lights.
6. Even though the semi hit the car, your odds are still better when you are inside your emergency or personal vehicle — belted in — if you have no task or are waiting for a tow. If you are on foot, at these speeds, even a small car will kill you if it hits you.

Fire and Life Safety Educator of the Year

To recognize educators who take the lead in making their communities safer, NFPA presents the Fire and Life Safety Educator of the Year Award.

Deadline is Feb. 12, 2016. You can [download the application](#) online.

Eligibility

NFPA is looking for fire and life safety educators in the United States or Canada who:

- Work for a local fire department or fire marshal's office.
- Use NFPA educational programs and materials in a consistent and creative way.
- Demonstrate excellence and innovation, reaching out to the community with NFPA materials.
- Applicants can be nominated or self-nominated. Recipients of a state or provincial educator award during 2015 from a fire department association, community organization, or government entity will be considered.

The Educator of the Year receives:

- \$1,000 honorarium.
- Travel to the NFPA annual conference for an award presentation at the general session.

The Local Fire Department Receives:

- \$1,000 donation to support public education activities

#FireFree

Last year will likely go down in the record books for all the wrong reasons. With 53 fire deaths, 2015 was the deadliest year for fires in Minnesota since 2011. While I know our Minnesota educators dedicate a great amount of time and energy working to increase knowledge and prevention and safety behavior in their communities, it is clear we still have work ahead of us. As we move into 2016, I challenge each of you to look at your departments' fire prevention program to see if there is a new, underserved or high risk audience in your community. Is there a way to reach out to them?

Each of you working in fire prevention provides a critical piece in making 2016 fire free. SFMD is asking people to share what steps they are taking to prevent fires in their homes using the hashtag #FireFree on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. You can help by using your social media, whether it is through your fire department Facebook page or your own. Remember the three leading causes of fires last year in Minnesota were cooking, heating and open flame.

Safety Source Blog

One news story recently in the NFPA Safety Source blog highlighted the life-saving power of fire safety education along with working smoke alarms. Another featured news story had a more tragic ending. The blog post highlights an 8-year-old student who had just learned safety messages in school and how he put them to use to help save himself, his 86-year-old grandmother and pet Chihuahua. In October, smoke alarms were also installed in the home due to a cooperative program between the American Red Cross and the Covington, Va., Fire and Rescue Squad.

Sadly, in nearby Worcester, Mass., a recent story reinforced the consequences of not having working smoke alarms in the home. While the department in Worcester also works to remind people of the importance of working smoke alarms, there are still residents who need to hear that message.

If you are interested in seeing more posts on the Safety Source blog you can visit the [NFPA website](#).