



Yadkin County Fire Marshal's Office

THE FLAME

Emergency Services News Letter



/// FIRE LINE - DO NOT CROSS /// FIRE LINE - DO NOT CROSS /// FIRE LINE - DO NOT CROSS ///

DECEMBER, 2006



Fire Safety Tips	2
Events/ Deadlines	2
Preventing Christmas Tree Fires	3
Winter Weather Awareness Week	4
Important Dates	4
Winter Fires	5
CO - The Invisible Killer	7
Firefighter's Drive Patiently	8



The Flu and You

Some Things You Need To Know About Pandemic Flu

Dale Trivette: Yadkin Co. Emergency Management

I'm sure you've heard all the talk about pandemic flu, avian influenza (bird flu), and all the planning that is going on to prepare for a possible epidemic. But what does it mean for YOU as an emergency responder in Yadkin County?

First, no one knows if or when a pandemic will occur, but almost everyone believes it is a matter of "when" not "if". Second, no one can predict the severity of the pandemic when it comes. Will it be like 1918 or 1968?

The Spanish Flu of 1918 appeared in North Carolina in late September of 1918 and spread like wildfire across the state. By October 4th, influenza was striking people in 24 counties. By the time it was over, at least 13,000 North Carolinians had died.

Selena W. Saunders, who accompanied a nurse in the textile town of Cramerton, recalled the 1918 pandemic like this:

"This new disease . . . struck suddenly, spent itself quickly in a burning three-day fever, often leaving its victim dead. The people lost faith in the remedies they had relied on all their lives, and they became frantic. Some of them locked themselves in their house, and refused to open the door for anyone.... Merchants nailed bars across their doors, and served the customers one-at-a-time at the doorway. We found whole families stricken, with none able to help the others. In one family the mother died without knowing that her son, who lay in the adjoining room, had died a few hours earlier."

Dan Tonkel, a resident of Goldsboro, remembered:

"I felt like I was walking on eggshells. I was afraid to go out, to play with my playmates, my classmates, my neighbors. I was almost afraid to breathe... People were afraid to talk to each other. It was like- 'don't breathe in my face, don't even look at me, because you might give me germs that will kill me."

"Farmers stopped farming; merchants stopped selling. The country more or less just shut down. Everyone was holding their breath, waiting for something to happen. So many people were dying; we could hardly count them. We never knew from one day to another who was going to be next on the death list."



"Continued on page 3"

**“Do Not
Overload
Electrical
Outlets”**

Fire Safety



Holiday Lights



- **Maintain Your Holiday Lights** - Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.
- **Do Not Overload Electrical Outlets** - Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires - they should not be warm to the touch.
- **Do Not Leave Holiday Lights on Unattended**

Source: US Fire Administration

NC Forest Service Burning Permits



Get Your Burning Permits Online
www.dfr.state.nc.us

Upcoming Events / Deadlines

-
- Fire Chief's Association Meeting - Boonville VFD January 3, 2007
 - 1st Responder Committee Meeting - Yadkin Campus SCC January 17, 2007
 - Fire & Rescue Association Meeting - West Yadkin VFD January 18, 2007



USFA Holiday Fire Prevention: Preventing Christmas Tree Fires

Each year fires occurring during the holiday season injure 2,600 individuals and cause over \$930 million in damage. According to the United States Fire Administration (USFA), there are simple life-saving steps you can take to ensure a safe and happy holiday. By following some of the outlined precautionary tips, individuals can greatly reduce their chances of becoming a holiday fire casualty.



- **Selecting a Tree for the Holiday**

Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needle should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard.

- **Caring for Your Tree**

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 by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

- **Disposing of Your Tree**

Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or woodburning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pick-up service.

The Flu and You

"Continued from page 1"



Hopefully, we will not see anything like the 1918 pandemic but we must be prepared. The goal is to break the cycle of transmission of the disease. Our best defense, vaccine, will probably not be available during the first wave of the pandemic. Development of an effective vaccine may take 6-8 months. Antiviral drugs, such as Tamiflu, should improve treatment outcomes and given prophylaxis could have a substantial effect on reducing transmission of the virus. The problem is that quantities of antiviral drugs are limited and will be rationed.

So, what are emergency responders to do? The number one protective measure; wash your hands well and often with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Use your personal protective equipment (PPE) on every call. Consider placing a mask on the patient that is coughing and/or sneezing. Stay home when you are sick. Get vaccinated! Influenza (flu) and pneumococcal (pneumonia) vaccines can prevent some serious respiratory illnesses. In 2004, there were 1,686 people who died of pneumonia and influenza in North Carolina.

Winter Weather Awareness Week

December 3-9, 2006

Submitted By: Phil Hysell, National Weather Service

December 3rd through the 9th is Winter Weather Awareness Week in North Carolina and the National Weather Service reminds citizens, businesses and schools to prepare now to stay safe this winter season. Now is the time to update emergency plans and replenish your winter weather survival kits which should include water, blankets, non-perishable food and other supplies. Also, have plenty of fresh batteries on hand and an alternative heating source that is approved for indoor use in case power is disrupted. Kerosene heaters should be properly vented and electric generators should be kept outdoors and away from any open windows or doors to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Burning charcoal inside also will cause carbon monoxide poisoning.

It is important that all citizens monitor changing weather conditions by listening carefully to local media and NOAA All-Hazards Weather Radio for storm watches or warnings.

Other winter weather safety tips include:

- Always keep at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food in your home.
- To stay warm, wear multiple layers of thin clothing instead of a single layer of thick clothing.
- If you must travel during a winter storm, store an emergency kit in your vehicle that includes warm blankets, changes of clothes, and non-perishable food and water. Always inform a relative or friend of your itinerary.
- If driving on snow or ice-covered roadways, reduce your speed. Leave plenty of room between you and other vehicles.
- If you can no longer drive safely, pull off the highway. Stay calm and remain in your vehicle. Do not set out on foot unless you can see a building close by where you know you can take shelter.
- Schools and businesses should also update their emergency plans and take inventory of emergency supplies that will be needed should inclement weather prevent students and employees from going home.

The National Weather Service urges residents to use “Winter Weather Awareness Week” as a time prepare for possible snow or ice storms. For the latest weather information visit: www.weather.gov

*Important
DATE!*

Fire Department Roster's Due

*Important
DATE!*

- North Carolina State Firemen's Association Roster - January 1st
- Pension Fund Roster and Certification - January 1st

USFA Fight Fire with Facts:

Winter Fires

More than 4,000 Americans die each year in fires and more than 20,000 are injured. Many of them might be alive today if they had only had the information they needed to avoid a disaster. The U.S. Fire Administration offers the following life-saving tips could make a big difference for you and your community.

Did you know?

- Eighty-two percent of all fire deaths occur in the home.
- Electrical fires are a special concern during the winter months, which call for more indoor activities and increased use of lighting, heating and appliances.
- Deaths caused by winter fires are particularly preventable.

Following these simple fire safety tips can increase your survival rate dramatically.

Winter Fires Life-Saving Tips

- Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Test smoke alarm batteries every month and change them at least once a year. Consider installing a 10-year lithium battery-powered smoke alarm, which is sealed so it cannot be tampered with or opened.
- Make sure wood stoves are properly installed, away from combustible surfaces, have the proper floor support and adequate ventilation. Never use flammable liquids (such as gasoline) to start or accelerate fire.
- Make sure your space heaters have an emergency shut off in case they tip over. Kerosene heaters are not permitted in many areas. ONLY use the fuel recommended by the manufacturer. Never refill a space heater while it is operating or still hot. Refuel outside, away from the house.
- Have your furnace and chimney professionally inspected annually and cleaned if necessary. Chimney tar build-up is a common cause of chimney fires.
- Use a glass or metal screen in front of your fireplace to prevent sparks igniting nearby carpets or furniture.
- Never thaw frozen pipes with a blow torch or other open flame. Use hot water or a UL listed device such as a hand-held dryer.
- Dispose of hot ashes in metal containers placed away from the house.
- Never use the range or oven to heat your home.
- If there is a fire hydrant near your home, keep it clear of snow for easy access.

For more information on how you can help prevent fires and fire deaths, please contact your local fire department on a non-emergency number or the U.S. Fire Administration at (800) 238-3358 or visit www.usfa.fema.gov or www.firesafety.gov.



You Can't Help... If You Don't Arrive

- + *Vehicle crashes are the second leading cause of firefighter fatalities*
- + *Deaths and injuries from vehicle crashes are the easiest to prevent*
- + *What can you do?*
 - + *Wear your seatbelt!*
 - + *Use extra caution in water tenders!*
 - + *If your wheels go off the side of the roadway, slow down before steering back!*
 - + *Use speed wisely!*
 - + *Anticipate curves in the roadway!*
 - + *Keep POV responses safe!*

Carbon Monoxide: The Invisible Killer

If I've heard it once, I've heard it a hundred times: I don't have to worry about carbon monoxide poisoning in my home because I'll smell a leak in time to get out safely.

Unfortunately, nothing could be further from the truth. Tragically, that kind of thinking can prove deadly for residents.

Here are the facts: Carbon monoxide (CO) has no odor. You can't smell it and you can't see it. Dangerous levels of carbon monoxide can build up from any fuel-burning appliance or equipment if it isn't working properly or if the CO that is produced isn't conducted safely to the outside. For example, if there isn't enough oxygen available to run your furnace, the rate of CO production can greatly increase. If you don't have a venting system to capture the CO, then heavy or light CO production can lead to a deadly build-up in your home.

According to the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), 656 people died from unintentional non-fire gas poisonings in 2001, and most of those deaths involved carbon monoxide. NFPA and the Yadkin County Fire Marshal strongly recommend that every home be protected by at least one CO detector, which can alert you to dangerous levels of CO in your home in time to prevent poisoning. Early warning of hazardous CO levels is very important, but prevention comes first. Know what you need to do to ensure your home is safe from CO. Cooking and heating equipment and motor vehicles in attached garages make up a large percentage of the home CO problem, but NFPA says that portable electric generators, camp stoves and lanterns can also be culprits when not used properly.

The symptoms of CO poisoning – severe headache, dizziness, nausea – can seem like other illnesses, such as the flu or food poisoning. Learn the signs; CO poisoning requires immediate medical attention.

You can prevent CO poisoning in your home with these key actions:

- Install at least one CO detector near the sleeping area; test it every month and learn the sound of the alarm.
- Have heating equipment inspected each year to identify damage or malfunction; make repairs as needed.
- Open the flue before using the fireplace.
- If you use a kerosene or gas heater, open a window slightly when the heater is in use.
- Use equipment properly; never use an oven to heat a room and never bring BBQ grills indoors or into a garage or covered porch.
- Generators must be used outdoors in well-ventilated areas, never inside the home or garage.
- Always move vehicles out of the garage after starting the ignition and then close the door.
- Don't allow snow or anything else to block the vents for your dryer, stove or heating equipment.

If your CO alarm signals, take it seriously. Quickly check to see if the battery power is low. If the alarm is steady, assume there is a CO leak and evacuate your home. Call your local Fire Department at this number **(911)** and report a suspected CO leak. The fire department personnel will let you know if it is safe to go back inside or if you need to arrange for a technician.

Carbon monoxide: you can't see it or smell it, but with the right actions you can stay safe from it.

FIREFIGHTERS! DRIVE PATIENTLY!!!

- D** on't go faster than road conditions allow.
- R** esponse Routes identified before leaving quarters.
- I** nsist on everyone being belted, ALWAYS.
- V** erify response priority with the officer.
- E** nsure all compartments are closed and latched.

- P** repare yourself physically and mentally.
- A** llow yourself enough room to stop.
- T** urn on the warning devices only when needed.
- I** nspect your unit thoroughly, every shift.
- E** xit the vehicle after checking for traffic.
- N** ever demand or expect the right of way.
- T** raining.
- L** ook around & under the unit before moving it.
- Y** ou are the key to your crews' safety.



Firefighter Response Plan

- **Get fully dressed in full PPE from head to toe!**
- **Get in!**
- **Sit down!**
- **Fasten your seatbelt!**
- **Enjoy the ride with a driver who will get you there in one piece!**



NEWS LETTER INFORMATION

Submit news letter information to **Eddie Weatherman**
eweatherman@yadkincountync.gov

To receive a copy of the news letter, send email request.

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