

Fire Commissioners Column.....

Bill Madison

As the cold weather returns I thought it would be a good time to review a few tips to ensure your home is prepared for the heating season. Probably the most important thing we can do is to ensure we have working smoke detectors in the house. There should be a smoke detector on each living level in the house preferably near the bedrooms. Two out of three people who died in house fires last year were asleep when the fire started so alarms need to be easily heard in the bedrooms. Batteries in smoke detectors should be changed each fall and tested frequently. It's also a good idea to discuss with all family members what you should do if the alarm sounds, especially in the middle of the night.

If you heat with a gas furnace you should have it inspected each fall to ensure proper operation and venting. If you use a fireplace or heat with a wood stove annual cleaning of the chimney or flue piping is very important. A one-half inch of creosote buildup in the chimney can cause a fire. Chimney fires are scary. You often hear a loud roar in the chimney and sometimes smell "something burning". If you suspect you are having a chimney fire, don't hesitate to call the fire department. Shut off the air supply to the fireplace or stove and get everyone out of the house. When you get outside, check for sparks from the chimney and for fire on the roof.

Every year I remind folks of the dangers of improperly disposing of fireplace and stove ashes and every year we seem to have at least one house fire caused by ashes people thought were out. Ashes need to be placed in a metal container with a lid and moved outside for several days before dumping. A plastic bucket set on the porch or in the garage is a house fire waiting to happen.

If you use portable space heaters be sure they are at least three feet from anything that might burn (curtains, newspapers, trash cans, upholstered furniture etc.). A space heater should be turned off when you leave the room.

Chipper Days

The fire district is looking into the possibilities of bringing back chipper days in the spring. There are apparently no grants available to fund this event so we are working with several groups to see if some sort of public/private partnership can be worked out. We are discussing a method whereby burnable yard waste could be dumped at a reasonable per load rate then hauled away for processing. There would be no costs for the fire district only the use of our property near fires station four in Tum Tum. More to follow.....