



Vol. 4
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Two locations**

ICS 300 & ICS 400

Commissioner Notes

By James M. Thomas

To say the month of September was a very unusual month weather wise would be an understatement. There has been a considerable amount of rain fall throughout the state, and we were very lucky not to feel the effects of some of the summer storms that hit other parts of the country. As we all know, we are not out of the hurricane season yet, and we will have to be very vigilant for the next two months before the winter season is upon us.

This month, we are highlighting “Fire Prevention Month” and we want to thank Alan Zygmunt of the Connecticut Fire Academy for his very interesting and informative article on “Fire Safety”. This message is one that is very important us not only this month but throughout the year. It is a great time to check out the fire alarm systems we have in our homes and businesses, and replace the batteries, and most of all, review the plans we have in place.

We are just coming off a very successful “Citizens Corps Conference” that was held on September 29th, with some 400 attendees. The keynote speaker, Dr. Stephen Flynn, reinforced what we are doing in the area of preparedness. We have to prepare for those types of incidents that are likely to happen in our state. That will always be the natural events such as flooding, hurricanes, wind storms, tornadoes, ice and snow storms, and we have to be personally prepared for our families and also for our businesses. Also highlighted is the CERT Training weekend which was held at the Connecticut Fire Academy on September 6th and 7th. Together, through your efforts, we are getting better prepared to deal with any disaster.

A special recognition to Sharon Mazzochi of the DEMHS staff who was asked to go to the White House to represent the Citizen Corps Program and to be part of the USA Freedom Corps Program. President Bush delivered remarks highlighting the tremendous efforts of the American people and their commitment to volunteering. Connecticut is clearly a leader in this area and this was also demonstrated with the CPTV Television Show “On Watch-CT,” that first appeared on September 11th, highlighting the efforts of the many organizations that rely on volunteers. There is always a need in the this area, and we continue to ask that you help spread the word and encourage your friends and neighbors to get involved!! Together we can and will make a difference!!

Enjoy the October Issue!

Fire Safety

By: Alan Zygmunt, Public Fire & Life Safety Education Coordinator, Connecticut Fire Academy

The week of October 5th through the 11th is Fire Prevention week. This year's theme is "Prevent Home Fires". This particular week in October was chosen for its historical influence. On October 9, 1871 the great Chicago fire swept through the city killing 300 people, leaving over 100,000 homeless and destroying over 17,000 buildings. The legend told today is of Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicking over a lantern which started the blaze. This might have some basis in reality, as the fire started in that barn but the legend of the cow was never proven.

In 1920 President Woodrow Wilson issued the first Fire Prevention Day proclamation and every year since 1925 the President has issued a similar proclamation.

Each year the National Fire Protection Association issues a theme for that year's Fire Prevention Week. This year's theme is "Prevent Home Fires" and the information contained in the main article will outline the best ideas for doing that.

This month's topic is all about Fire Safety. For most of us, memories of the bright red trucks and men in big boots and funny hats come to mind when we remember our elementary school exposure to fire safety lessons. Most communities concentrate their efforts on the highest risk groups, children and the elderly. However, in between the risk groups is where many of the lessons we once knew by heart can get lost or forgotten.

As adults, we have many concerns competing for our time and attention; family, work, the high cost of everything...

An illustration showing thousands fleeing the City of Chicago during the fire of 1871.



It's easy to overlook the safety lectures we have heard over the years. Often when an emergency situation happens, adults react in the worst way. I have heard multiple stories from adults; carrying burning pans towards the door (and catching fire to everything as they go), ignoring fire alarms, improper storage of ashes, and even worse. Usually these stories include the lines "I had no idea how quickly it could spread" or "There was so much smoke, I couldn't see anything!"

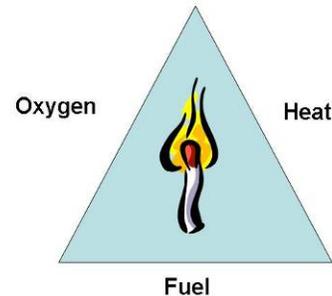
Fire fighters and other fire prevention experts have been repeating the basic fire safety lessons for years, but after hearing the same incorrect actions being done in the time of an emergency, sometimes I wonder if the real risk group is the adult? This article will re-state and put a twist on the basic fire safety lessons from our grammar school days and allow you to refresh those important life saving skills with your family.

The United States has one of the worst records in the industrialized world for fire safety. In the US over 3000 people die annually in fires. In many European countries, they typically count their annual fire deaths on one hand. In the US in 2006 80 % of all fire deaths occur in residential structures with 66% occurring in 1 and 2 family homes.

These statistics show a disturbing pattern, but we need to know the causes of fires to combat them effectively. I go back to the trusty fire triangle whether I'm teaching children or adults about fire.

The Public Education office at the Connecticut Fire Academy offers assistance to local Fire Departments and other groups dealing with public education and prevention of fires. We have informational handouts available and get information to your group on how to find safety materials to use in your program. We can also offer specialized classes on Fire extinguishers, Home safety inspections, and other important safety topics. For additional information call the Public Education office at 860-627-6363 ext. 222 or visit our website at www.ct.gov/cfpc

The Fire Triangle



The triangle consists of three elements, which are required for a fire to start. Fire fighters learn ways to remove one of the "legs" of the triangle and it puts fires out. However, if we look closely at the triangle, we see where **all** Fire Prevention messages come from. The air and fuel legs of the triangle will always be present in our homes (until we live in all concrete homes with concrete furniture) so we need to look closely at the heat sources in our home. Think of all things in your home, which are causes of heat. Cooking, Electricity, Smoking, Candles and Furnaces are what come to mind. That is the list of the most common causes of home fires in the US.

Cooking continues to be the number one cause of fires in the US. Usually cooking fires start when the food burns and catches other nearby combustibles. Causes for this are many, but unattended cooking, lack of maintenance (grease build up on stoves and ovens) and combustibles too close to the equipment are most common. To prevent these incidents we offer these tips;

- Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling or broiling food.
- Try not to wear loose fitting clothing around the stove or oven.
- Keep a "Kid Free Zone" of three feet around your cooking area.
- Ensure that any oven mitts you use are dry. If they are damp, they can cause a scald injury when heated.

If a stovetop fire starts, **LEAVE THE PAN THERE**, carefully slide a cover over the pan and turn off the heat. Leave the pan alone until fully cooled before attempting to move it. Using water will cause a huge flare up and carrying the pan outside...well, I think we covered that.



A stove top grease fire after throwing water on it.

For oven fires, keep the oven door closed and turn off the heat. Ovens are designed to keep the heat inside so allow the burning material to burn out and cool before opening up the door.

Electricity is a huge problem due to the continually increasing need for more and more power in our homes. Think of how many individual things are plugged in in your bathroom; or your bedroom; how about the living room? Overloaded outlets are a big problem now. If we need another outlet we simply get a power strip or a multi-plug adapter to give us the necessary space. Remember that many of the power strips sold have some sort of surge protection, but that does not protect you from the heat generated just from the electricity running through the wires.



These tips can help protect you from the hazards of electricity in our homes;

- Limit the number of power strips and extension cords used. If you need more outlets, you may need an electrical service upgrade.
- Have your electrical service checked by a licensed electrician for problem areas. In new homes, each bathroom is often given its own circuit.
- Consider installing overload protection features, which will automatically shut off the power in an overload situation.

With the high cost of heating fuel, this winter will show a spike in the installation and use of alternative heating units. However you heat your home, have the system checked annually to ensure proper operation. This will also save you money by increasing the efficiency of the furnace. If you are considering installing a woodstove, pellet stove or any sort of other heating device, check with your local fire or building department to check the regulations on installation of these units. Unregulated or illegal installations of these items cause many fires annually which can be prevented by following the regulations already in place.

The use of Candles has jumped in recent years. The popularity of aromatherapy, Yankee Candle and others has put candles back into the top five fire causes again. When using candles follow these tips:

- Never leave the room when candles are burning. "If you go out, Blow it out".
- Use sturdy and stable candleholders to prevent tipping.
- Keep any combustible materials at least 12 inches away from lit candles. (Remember a breeze can move curtains into the path of the flame or pets can knock them over.)
- Use flashlights, not candles, for emergency lighting. After storms, which cause the loss of power, there is always a surge in the number of candle-caused fires.

If a fire does occur what is the best defense?

First, the smoke detector is by far the most reliable and cheapest investment you can make for your family's safety. With the installation of smoke detectors comes responsibility. Many times when the smoke alarm goes off the first reaction to nearly every adult is that it is a false alarm. We mostly ignore these valuable seconds of time that the detector is giving us. After all, if I don't see fire from here, how bad could it be? The best course of action when a detector sounds is to get everyone outside and call the fire department. If you don't know the reason for the alarm, the fire department is trained and equipped to properly investigate the alarm and give you information.

Another important component is your escape plan. Families need to come up with a plan together and practice it so everyone knows what to do. Choose a meeting place outside where everyone will go during an emergency. That way you will know that everyone got out safely. When the Fire department arrives, make sure that someone talks to them to let them know what you saw and if anyone might still be inside. If you need additional help with your escape plan, contact your local fire department for assistance.

I hope this review of fire safety lessons will jar those memories of the same information all those years ago. Review this with your family to ensure that you are doing everything you can to keep them safe. By watching for heat sources in our homes, we can eliminate the most common causes of home fires. Also, if tragedy ever strikes, we can plan and rehearse just what to do to keep everyone safe. If you need additional information please contact your local fire department, or online resources include USFA.org and NFPA.org.



Volunteering & Washington D.C.



On September 8, 2008, Sharon Mazzochi (representing Citizen Corps) and five other constituents from Connecticut attended the White House event hosted by President Bush highlighting the accomplishments of USA Freedom Corps, the volunteer initiative launched as part of a national Call to Service after the attacks of 9/11. President Bush provided “Remarks on Volunteerism” and encouraged Americans to be citizens and not spectators and have Americans connect with opportunities to serve their neighbors in need. President Bush spoke on the White House South lawn to a crowd of over 1,500 people followed by a tour of the White House.

On September 9, 2008, Citizen Corps had a signing ceremony at the Indian Treat Room located in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. Approximately one hundred people attended the signing ceremony that formalized the partnership between the Citizen Corps Program and MyGoodDeed.org (formally One Day’s Pay). Highlights of MyGoodDeed.org’s efforts include to transform September 11 into an annual recognized national day of charitable service and to update the Statement of Affiliation to promote volunteer services and encourage citizens to participate in disaster preparedness, response and recovery activities. Alison Young, (Special Assistant to the President and Director of USA Freedom Corps) presented Gary Friedman (Emergency Management Coordinator of Broward County, Florida) with the Presidential Volunteer Service Award.

Upcoming Training & Exercise

Oct 7 thru 9	ICS 300 — for Expanding Incidents—New Haven
Oct 14	Emergency Planning For Schools Workshop—Hamden
Oct 14 thru 16	Public Safety WMD Response—Samplings & Guidelines—New Haven
Oct 15	Emergency Planning For Schools Workshop—Hartford
Oct 15 thru 17	Investigating Domestic Violence homicides—POSTC
Oct 19	CT Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial Service—Windsor Locks CFA
Oct 25 & 26	ICS 400—Advanced Command, Complex Incidents—North Branford CFA
Nov 18 thru 20	ICS 300 — for Expanding Incidents—Brainard
Dec 10 & 11	ICS 400—Advanced Command, Complex Incidents—Brainard

For training & exercise questions contact the Training Unit at 860-256-0840. Fax: 860-706-5539 or email: Training.demhs@ct.gov

You may register for these courses as listed at: www.ct.gov/demhs; or through POSTC at www.ct.gov/post; or through the CT Fire Academy (CFA) at www.ct.gov/cfa.

Volunteer Connecticut

Since the formation in 1862 of the Seventeenth CT Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War, Connecticut has had a long history of volunteerism to help provide security, safety and shelter for it's citizens and visitors. This trend continues today in all our communities and across the State. Volunteers staff fire houses, shelters, provide food, respond to major incidents, and protect and secure the well being of all our citizens. The opportunity to volunteer comes in countless forms and incorporates a myriad of skills for those wishing to give back to their communities. The website shows some options to consider, but many towns offer additional choices for those wishing to share their time and expertise for the benefit of others.

For more information please go to:

<http://www.ct.gov/demhs/cwp/view.asp?Q=422330&A=1939>



CERT Weekend 2008



Photo By: Bob Scata

Emergency Planning For Schools Workshop
 Co-Sponsored by the State Department of Education and
 The Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security

October 14, and 15, 2008
 8:30 to 3:30

Workshop Locations:

Area Cooperative Education (ACES), Tuesday, October 14

205 Skiff Street, Hamden (parking is tight – try to car pool!)

Metropolitan District Commission, Wednesday October 15, 2008

125 Maxim Road, Hartford, CT (Metropolitan District Commission facility)

(Light Continental Breakfast served at each starting at 8:00 am)

Lunch is provided

Register at: www.ct.gov/demhs - (training calendar- October)

This is a one day workshop that will:

Describe emergency response operations, roles and duties;

Explain how the Incident Command System can be applied in the school environment and used to develop and exercise the plan;

Discussion of potential hazards that may impact schools;

Explain how to develop and test an Emergency Response Plan.

This workshop is designed for school administrators, principals, facility (custodial) managers, special educators, nurses, school resource officers and mental health staff.

IMPORTANT - PREREQUISITE

All attendees must take the FEMA online course IS-100SC, Introduction to ICS for Schools available at www.training.fema.gov (click on Independent Study and then ISP courses.) Please bring your completion certificate to registration.

Ideally, schools should attend as 3 person teams which will enable them to assess their current school emergency plans and where appropriate, make adjustments. However, single registrations are welcomed.

Attendance will be limited to 70 participants. First come, first served.

Please complete the following information:

Name _____ Position _____

School District _____ School _____

Telephone _____

Fax _____ Email _____

Sponsors: State Department of Education
 Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security
 State Child Safety and Crisis Response Committee



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