

# *Hartsdale Fire District*

## Winter 2008 Newsletter

### ***HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL!!!***

#### **Holiday Candles!**



The scent and aura of candles certainly help set the festive mood for the holiday season. However, the top five days for home candle fires are Christmas, Christmas Eve, New Year's Day, New Year's Eve, and Halloween. During 2005, an

estimated 15,600 home structure fires started by candles were reported to local fire departments. These fires resulted in an estimated 150 civilian deaths, 1,270 civilian injuries and an estimated direct property loss of \$539 million.

With this in mind, there are some safety rules that should be followed any time you are using candles, especially during the holiday season.

- Keep candles at least 12 inches from anything that can burn.
- Use sturdy, safe candleholders.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended.
- Extinguish candles when you leave a room
- Avoid using candles in bedrooms and sleeping areas.
- Always use a flashlight, not a candle, for emergency lighting.



- And most important, consider using battery-operated flameless candles. These are a relatively new product on the market. Battery Operated Candles give you the look, feel and even the aroma of wax candles in a flameless, fire safe environment. Flameless LED battery candles come in all popular shapes, sizes, and fragrances and even "flicker" like regular candles.

#### **Home Heating Equipment**

With the cost of home heating oil and gas skyrocketing, many people are looking for alternate ways to heat their homes. If you are one of these people, you need to know that heating equipment is the leading cause of home fires during the months of December, January and February.

- When buying a new space heater, make sure it carries the mark of an independent testing laboratory.

- Install any heater according to manufacturer's instructions and applicable codes or better yet, have it installed by a professional.



- Plug your electric-powered space heater into an outlet with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord.

- In your fireplace or wood stove, use only dry, seasoned wood to avoid the build-up of creosote, an oily deposit that easily catches fire and accounts for most chimney fires. Use only paper or kindling wood, not a flammable liquid, to start the fire.

- Make sure your fireplace has a sturdy screen to prevent sparks from flying into the room. Allow fireplace and woodstove ashes to cool before disposing in a metal container, kept away from your home.

- Turn off space heaters whenever the room they are in is unoccupied or you go to bed.

- Do not use your oven to heat your home.

- Make sure fuel-burning equipment is vented to the outside, that the venting is kept clear and unobstructed, and that the exit point is properly sealed around the vent.

- Inspect all heating equipment annually, and clean as necessary.

- Test smoke alarms monthly; install a carbon monoxide alarm in a central location outside each sleeping area.

## **\*Babysitters Graduate\***

In October 2008, The Hartsdale Fire District graduated 36 new babysitters from its annual Baby Sitters Course, bringing to 1,071 the total number of babysitters graduated over the past 36 years. This year's class was the largest class since 1991. As a public service, a list of the current babysitters is available to you and can be picked up by stopping at Fire Headquarters at 300 West Hartsdale Ave.



When you hire a babysitter who has been trained by the Hartsdale Fire District, you can be confident knowing that they have completed 20 hours of

specialized training in how to care for your child and deal with emergency situations. Special thanks to our outside staff instructors: Susan Stevenson of Creative Beginnings Nursery School, Joanne Nemeth R.N. from White Plains Hospital, Police Officer Peter Dandreano from Greenburgh Police, Antonino Teresi from Chef Central, and Dr. Mike Kessler, from Westchester Medical Center, a former Hartsdale Volunteer firefighter.

## **Can We Find Your House?**

In case of a fire or other emergency, would the firefighters, police officers, or EMS workers be able to find and easily identify your house? Is your house number



prominently displayed in large enough letters (at least four inches high) and in an area that is easily seen from the street? Do you have adequate lighting so the emergency responders

can safely make their way across your property to your front door? If there is a fire hydrant in front of your house, is it clear of shrubs and easily seen? Now is the time to be sure. Take a look at your house, both during the day and at night, as if you were an emergency worker. Would you be able to find your house easily in an emergency if you were a stranger? If not, do whatever it takes to make it more visible and more easily accessible.

**To report a fire or emergency call  
911 or 949-2324**

**For all other business call 949-2325**

## **Christmas Tree Safety**

A beautifully decorated Christmas tree is one of the most cheerful symbols of the holiday season. Carefully decorating your Christmas tree can help make your holidays safer.

- When decorating your tree, always use lights listed by a testing laboratory. Some lights are designed only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both
- Any string of lights with worn, frayed or broken cords or loose bulb connections should not be used.
- Always unplug Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed
- Never use lit candles to decorate a tree, and make sure any lit candles in the room are placed well away from tree branches.

- Try to keep live trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water daily. Do not purchase a tree that is dry or dropping needles



- If you purchase an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled as fire-retardant.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, such as fireplaces and radiators. Try to position the tree near an outlet so that cords are not running long distances. Do not place the tree where it may block exits
- Safely dispose of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are highly flammable and should not be left in a house or garage, or placed against the house.

## **Is Your Home Fire Safe?**

Not sure? Call the Hartsdale Fire Department and we will stop by and perform a free home fire safety inspection. We will check for common hazards found in many homes, we will ensure that you have enough smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers, and we will verify that they are in the correct locations. We will also help you formulate a home escape plan for the whole family. Call today for an appointment – 949-2325.

**TEACH SOMEONE YOU LOVE FIRE PREVENTION**