



FALL 2011

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THE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER OF SOUTH KING FIRE & RESCUE

FROM YOUR FIRE CHIEF



AL CHURCH

It is truly my pleasure to serve as your Fire Chief/Administrator as I enter my 34th year as a member of the fire department. I was appointed to this position just ten days before the horror of 9-11, ten years ago. This year, more than any other, serves as reminder of the selfless service that our firefighters and staff provide you. As we remember the difficult times following the

horrendous attacks on our country, please take the time to remember the unselfish acts of our country's firefighters, police officers, and military members as they put their lives on the line every day to protect others.

We are now over five years into our merged environment of South King Fire & Rescue, serving citizens of Federal Way, Des Moines, and a portion of unincorporated King County. We are proud to serve a population of nearly 150,000, responding to nearly 16,000 emergencies each year. We do this with an incredible staff of dedicated fire professionals, civilian staff who support their efforts, and an elected core of Fire Commissioners.

Our Fire Commissioners represent all of you as their elected representatives, and I thank each of them for their ongoing support and contributions to the community: Board Chair/Commissioner Bill Gates and Commissioner Mark Freitas, both of who live in Federal Way; Vice Chair/Commissioner James A. Fossos, who lives in Des Moines; and Commissioners Mark Thompson and John Rickert, who both live in unincorporated King County. I appreciate their efforts to represent our citizens, especially during these difficult economic times.

Here at South King Fire & Rescue, we continue to work hard to provide you with the highest level of service possible in the current economy. In three short years, we have lost nearly \$6 million in revenues due to the loss of property taxes associated with declining home and property values. We have attempted to mitigate these losses by closing one emergency aid unit, converting another into a part-time staffed unit, allowing 16 positions to remain vacant, which includes 13 firefighter positions that have been vacated since 2010, and cutting our budget to the bone. We will continue our efforts to reduce spending as we head into 2012, but at some point we need to do something to enhance our revenues as we simply cannot continue to shrink services without doing harm to you, our public. We will not stand by and let that happen.

So once again, thank you for letting us serve you. When you see one of our firefighters or civilian staff, know that they take our Mission Statement to heart as they work hard for you day in and day out:

"We help people by responding with professional fire department services."

AL CHURCH

FIRE CHIEF/ADMINISTRATOR

Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery On Sunday, November 6 Clocks "Fall" Back

As Daylight Saving Time ends and clocks are turned back, South King Fire & Rescue reminds our community to make another change that could save their lives – to change the battery in your smoke alarms.

Don't wait for the alarm to "chirp." That means the battery is dying. Instead, put a fresh battery in all alarms at least once a year. The "extra" hour gained on November 6 can also be spent to test smoke alarms, to plan "two ways out" and to practice escape routes with the entire family

Changing smoke alarm batteries once a year is one of the simplest, most effective ways to reduce death and injuries. In fact, the risk of dying in a fire is cut in half in homes with working smoke alarms.

"The peak time for home fire fatalities is between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. when most families are sleeping," said Fire Marshal Gordie Olson. "A working smoke alarm can give people the extra seconds they need to get out safely." It is also recommended to replace smoke alarms every ten years.

Dead or missing batteries are the most common cause of non-working smoke alarms, while 80% of fire deaths each year occur in homes without this life-saving feature.

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Interconnected Alarms: Helping You Prepare for Fire

Recent research performed by South King Fire & Rescue staff and published at the National Fire Academy, found that new technology exists to make *older* homes safer by interconnecting all smoke alarms. This provides a much earlier warning – when one goes off, they all go off.

The technology is now available in a wireless battery powered smoke alarm. While this technology exists, and is required in any new home and those built within the past few years, it has only been available in a hard-wired version; therefore it has not been available to older homes without extensive and costly rewiring.

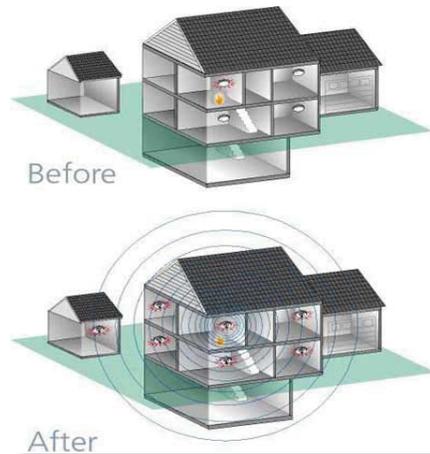
Interconnecting smoke alarms allows everyone to be alerted instantly when one goes off anywhere in the home. The idea is to install smoke alarms in every bedroom, in the hallway outside the bedrooms, and at least one on each floor of the home. Studies have shown that the additional time to escape a fire when someone is sleeping upstairs and is immediately awakened by a fire detected downstairs, helps significantly in their survival.

We recommend checking local hardware stores or online for availability and pricing.

This past February, South King Fire & Rescue completed a pilot program at Belmor Park in Federal Way, all in an effort to keep residents safe from fire. Throughout February and March, two wireless interconnected alarms were installed in 50 residences in the senior mobile home park. Seniors are considered a vulnerable population when it comes to escaping and surviving a fire.

During a fire safety presentation to Belmor seniors about the importance of smoke alarms, the idea to install the alarms came about. The alarms were purchased with donations made to the fire department over the years and it seemed fitting to return those resources back to the community in the form of one of the most important life-saving tools available – smoke alarms.

If you have further questions regarding these types of alarms, or any smoke alarm device, please contact 253-946-7347.



WTC Steel Beam Finds Home in the Community



From left to right: Lieutenant Scott Mahlen, Firefighter Sven Schievink, Battalion Chief Chuck Kahler and Deputy Chief Gordie Olson.

Lieutenant Scott Mahlen and Firefighter Sven Schievink traveled to New York to pick up a piece of the World Trade Center. The trip took them 20 days and involved many stories attached to each stop they made. The steel beam will be featured at a memorial at Station 64 which is set for completion September 11, 2012.

Calendar

CPR & First Aid Classes 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

November 5

December 3

Classes are held at Station 68, visit www.southkingfire.org for information on how to register.

Regular Board of Fire Commissioner Meetings 3 p.m.

October 25

November 27

December 22

Meetings are held at Station 68.

Child Safety Seat Inspections - St. Francis Hospital, 5:30 p.m.

November 8

December 6

Station Tours

December 13

Please call 253-946-7347 to sign up your daycare or preschool

South King Fire & Rescue

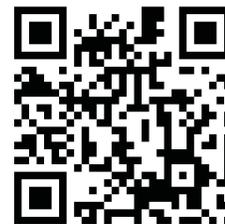
STATION 62 - HEADQUARTERS

31617 1st Avenue South

Federal Way, WA 98003

253-839-6234

www.southkingfire.org



Smoke Alarms in Your Home: What You Need to Know

WHY SHOULD I HAVE SMOKE ALARMS?

Smoke alarms are the best protection from fire. They provide an early warning signal in order for you and your family to escape.

WHAT TYPES OF SMOKE ALARMS ARE AVAILABLE?

There are many different brands of smoke alarms, but there are two basic types – ionization and photoelectric. Ionization alarms are the most common and least expensive. They sound faster when there is a flaming, fast moving fire. Photoelectric alarms are quicker at sensing smoldering, smoky fires. There are also dual sensor alarms that combine ionization and photoelectric into one unit. South King Fire & Rescue recommends installing dual sensor alarms since both types of alarms are better at detecting different fires and we don't know what type of fire might start in a home. In addition to the basic types of alarms, there are alarms made to meet the needs of people with hearing disabilities. These alarms may use strobe lights and flash and/or vibrate to alert those who are unable to hear standard smoke alarms.

WHERE DO I PUT THEM?

Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement. It is also recommended to install smoke alarms in both the inside and outside of where people sleep.

ARE SMOKE ALARMS HARD TO INSTALL?

If your smoke alarms are hard wired, or operate off electricity, you will need to have a qualified electrician do the initial installation or install replacements. For battery powered smoke alarms, all you will need for installation is a screw driver. For all smoke alarm installations, be sure to follow manufacturer's instructions. If you are uncomfortable standing on a ladder, ask a relative, friend or neighbor for help.

HOW DO I KEEP MY SMOKE ALARM WORKING?

The batteries need to be replaced at least once a year and the whole unit should be replaced every 8-10 years. Some smoke alarms are powered by long-lasting batteries and are designed to replace the entire unit according to manufacturer's instructions. In hard-wired, battery back up smoke alarms, batteries still need to be replaced once a year. The fire department recommends testing all smoke alarms once a month and writing the purchase date with a marker on the inside of the alarm so you will know when to replace it.

WHAT IF THE SMOKE ALARM GOES OFF WHILE I'M COOKING?

Then it's doing it's job. Do not disconnect your smoke alarm if it goes off when cooking or other non-fire causes. Clear the air by waving a towel near the alarm, leaving the batteries in place. The alarm may need to be moved to a new location. Some models even have a "hush" button that silences nuisance alarms.

Home Safety Tips

South King Fire & Rescue Offers the Following Tips for Protecting your Home and Family from Fire

- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period, turn off the stove.
- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable heater.
- Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires, space heaters, and the stoves.
- Replace or repair damaged or loose electrical cords.
- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- Use deep, wide ashtrays on a sturdy table.
- Blow out all candles when you the leave the room or go to bed. Avoid use of candles in the bedroom and other areas where people may fall asleep.
- Install smoke alarms inside each bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home including the basement.
- Interconnect all smoke alarms in the home so when one sounds, they all sound.
- Test smoke alarms at least monthly and replace all smoke alarms when they are ten years old or sooner if they do not respond when tested.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows how to respond if the smoke alarm sounds.
- Pull together everyone in your household and make a plan. Walk through your home and inspect all possible ways out. Households with children should consider drawing a floor plan of your home, marking two ways out of each room, including windows and doors.
- If you are building or remodeling your home, consider install home fire sprinklers.

To learn more about home fire safety, visit www.nfpa.org.

Fire Department Officially Launches FDCARES to Help Community

Do you or a loved one have a situation that may cause injury or illness that you are finding difficult to solve on your own? Are you finding that you have nowhere else to turn? At South King Fire & Rescue, we can help.

FDCARES is a fire department based community injury and illness prevention program designed to assist residents of our district with issues *before* the issue becomes an emergency. Our hope is to help improve the quality of health throughout our community and provide for a longer, healthier independent lifestyle.

There may be services available to you that you are not aware of. Let us assist you in navigating the Social Service Network, and advocate on your behalf with insurance providers and other health care providers.



Frequently when a member of our community finds themselves in need of the emergency 9-1-1 system for *low acuity* type assistance it is because they have nowhere else to turn. This first call to 9-1-1 can be a predictor of future 9-1-1 use as emergency providers are able to correct the immediate problem that is taking place. What hasn't taken place to this point is corrective action that could have prevented an individual's current need for emergency services or prevent future needs for the same service.

Here at South King Fire & Rescue, about 75% of our 9-1-1 calls are medical in nature, some high acuity, others low acuity where a call to a physician or nurse line may be a better solution instead of a trip to the emergency room. Another common call for service is when someone falls down and needs help back on their feet. This type of call although non-life threatening, is an opportunity for the FDCARES team to help that individual from falling again and potentially injuring themselves the next time.



The FDCARES program is designed to connect members of our community to social services and even provide some risk reduction devices to keep them stay safer. There are many social services available ranging from local churches, to local government services, to County services, to State and Federal government services. Although many of these social services can be very busy, there appears to be some disconnect from these various services and many members of society. Many people are not aware that there is something that can be done to assist them that will directly affect their life in a positive manner

Currently, the FDCARES team receives referrals from the firefighters of people who may need additional services and assistance and patient follow-up takes place from there. Community members who are aware of their own needs can contact FDCARES directly at 253-946-7347.

FDCARES at South King Fire & Rescue is the *second* program in the region. The program originated with our neighbors to the east at Kent Regional Fire Authority.

2010 Incident Summary

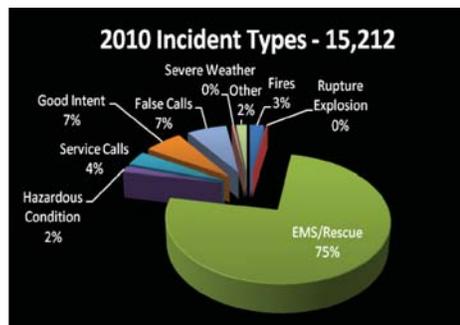
Most frequent response
MEDICAL/RESCUE (75% OF THE TIME)

EMS Responses in 2010
11, 458

EMS Responses in 2009
11,077

Busiest days of the week
MONDAYS & SATURDAYS

Busiest time of day
BETWEEN NOON - 8 P.M



10 year comparison: 2000-2010

