



Lakewood Fire District No. 1

316 River Avenue
Lakewood, NJ 08701

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 1, 2018

Subject: Fire Prevention Week

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Fire Prevention Week October 7th through 13th, 2018

The following information is provided by the Fire Commissioners of Lakewood Fire District No. 1, in conjunction with Fire Chief Mike D'Elia, Fire Prevention Coordinator Jacob Woolf and the members of the Lakewood Fire Department.

The history of Fire Prevention Week has its roots in the Great Chicago Fire, which began on October 8, 1871, but lasted 27 hours and incurred the most damage the following day. It remains one of the best-known fire disasters in the world. As a result, October 9, 1871, is the date most often connected with this tragic conflagration. In the end, the Great Chicago Fire killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2000 acres. While the origin of the fire has never been determined, there has been much speculation over how it began. One popular legend was that Mrs. Catherine O'Leary was milking her cow when the animal kicked over a lamp, setting the O'Leary's barn on fire and starting the spectacular blaze. It is a less well-known fact that on the same day of the Great Chicago Fire, the Peshtigo Fire roared through Northern Wisconsin, killing 1,152 people and burning more than a million acres.

On the Great Chicago Fire's 40th anniversary, the former Fire Marshals Association of North America (now the International Fire Marshals Association, or IFMA) sponsored the first National Fire Prevention Day, advocating an annual observance as a way to keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention. In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation, and since 1922, National Fire Prevention Week has been observed on the Sunday-through-Saturday period in which October 9th falls. In addition, the President of the United States has signed a proclamation pronouncing a national observance during that week every year since 1925 making Fire Prevention Week the oldest safety commemoration.

Dedicated to raising public awareness about the dangers of fire and how to prevent it, the National Fire Prevention Association, or NFPA is the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week.

Statistics from the NFPA show that a person has a higher risk of dying today in a reported home fire than they did in decades past, and that hard truth is at the heart of the agency's Fire Prevention Week efforts this year. The theme for Fire Prevention Week, which will take place October 7th through 13th, focuses on steadfast awareness with a simple phrase: "Look. Listen. Learn. Be aware: fire can happen anywhere."

The NFPA encourages everyone to focus on these three simple, yet essential calls to action to reduce the risk of fire and help them prepare in the event one occurs:

- Look for places fire can start.
- Listen for the sound of the smoke alarm.
- Learn two ways out of each room.

In any fire, a quick, decisive response is essential. Take every fire alarm seriously and respond immediately. A delayed reaction could cost you your safety. Get out first and then call the fire department from outside. Stay out; don't go back inside for any reason. Use your closest escape route. If you encounter smoke, use an alternative exit. If you must escape through a smoky area, crawl low, keeping your head one to two feet above the floor. Once out, move well away from the building to stay out of the way of firefighters and emergency apparatus.

Always identify two exits when you enter an unfamiliar building. The way you entered the building may not be the quickest or safest escape route in an emergency. Do not use elevators in a fire emergency; use the stairs. Look for standard fire protection equipment such as fire sprinklers in the ceilings, fire alarm and detection panels, pull stations, fire extinguishers, posted evacuation plans, etc. Follow your instincts – don't stay in a building that has blocked or padlocked exit doors, is overcrowded or has hazardous activity going on that makes you uncomfortable. If you don't feel safe, don't stay inside. Report locked or blocked exits and overcrowding issues immediately to fire officials.

Additional Fire Safety Information for parents, children and educators can be found by visiting the Fire District Website at lakewoodfd.org and clicking on Sparky's Firehouse or New Jersey Fire Safety under the Links heading. In addition, **the Lakewood Fire Department is hosting Fire Safety Day on Sunday, October 21, 2018, from 1:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** This event will be held at Fire Station 74-1 which is located at 800 Monmouth Avenue, Lakewood, NJ. Fire apparatus will be on display and fire safety literature will be available.