



Lakewood Fire District No. 1

733 Cedar Bridge Avenue
Lakewood, NJ 08701

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Subject: Fire Prevention Week

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Fire Prevention Week October 9th through 15th, 2022

The following information is provided by the Board of Fire Commissioners of Lakewood Fire District No. 1, in conjunction with Fire Chief Jonathan Yahr, and the members of the Lakewood Fire Department.

In conjunction with Fire Prevention Week, **The Lakewood Fire Department is hosting Fire Prevention Day on Sunday, October 2nd, 2022, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** This event will be held at Red Square which is located in downtown Lakewood at 3rd Street and Clifton Avenue. There will be interactive Fire Service demonstrations, Apparatus demonstration, Gift Bags with Fire Safety information, and Fire Safety videos for viewing.

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.

According to NFPA data, home — the place people feel safest from fire — is where they are at greatest risk, with three-quarters (74 percent) of all U.S. fire deaths occurring in homes. When a home fire does occur, it's more likely to be serious; people are more likely to die in a home fire today than they were in 1980.

“Today’s homes burn faster and hotter than they used to, minimizing the amount of time they have to escape safely,” said Carli. “In a typical home fire, you may have as little as two minutes to get out from the time the smoke alarms sound.”

The Fire Prevention Week 2022 theme, “Fire Won’t Wait. Plan Your Escape,” promotes potentially life-saving messages that can mean the difference between life and death in a fire. Developing a home escape plan with all members of the household and practicing it regularly ensures that everyone knows what to do when the smoke alarm sounds and uses that time wisely.

Following are key messages behind this year’s “Fire Won’t Wait. Plan Your Escape” theme:

- Make sure your home escape plan meets the needs of all your family members, including those with sensory or physical disabilities.
- Smoke alarms should be installed inside every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of your home. Smoke alarms should be interconnected so when one sounds, they all sound.
- Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible. Make sure all doors and windows open easily.
- Have an outside meeting place a safe distance from your home where everyone should meet.
- Practice your home fire drill at least twice a year with everyone in the household, including guests. Practice at least once during the day and at night.

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 www.lakewoodfd.org and clicking on Sparky's Firehouse or New Jersey Fire Safety under the Links heading.