



MISSOULA RURAL FIRE DISTRICT

2521 South Avenue West • Missoula, Montana 59804

(406) 549-6172 • FAX (406) 549-6023

www.mrfdfire.org

October 5, 2018

Press Release

National Fire Prevention Week October 7th – 13th, 2018

Press release prepared by:
Battalion Chief Greg Orr

The Missoula Rural Fire District (MRFD) would like to remind everyone that National Fire Prevention Week begins this Sunday October 7th, 2018. Fire Prevention Week is observed each year during the week of October 9th in commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire, which began on October 8, 1871, and caused devastating damage. This horrific conflagration killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures, and burned more than 2,000 acres of land. In 1925, President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed Fire Prevention Week a national observance, making it the longest-running public health observance in our country.

The theme for Fire Prevention Week 2018 is “**Look. Listen. Learn. Be aware. Fire can happen anywhere.**” This theme covers three basic but essential steps to take to reduce the likelihood of having a fire—and how to escape safely in the event of one.

Look for places fire could start. Take a good look around your home. Identify potential fire hazards and take care of them.

- Remove clutter from the cooking area, keeping anything that can burn (i.e., towels, oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, loose papers/mail) away from the stovetop.
- Keep a close eye on what you’re cooking. Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, boiling or broiling food. If you are simmering, baking or roasting food, check it regularly.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected each year by a qualified professional.
- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, including furnaces, fireplaces, wood stoves and portable space heaters.
- Turn space heaters off when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Extension cords are intended for temporary use. Never use extension cords as permanent wiring.
- Check electrical cords to make sure they are not running across doorways or under carpets.
- Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Avoid using candles in the bedroom and other areas where people may fall asleep.
- Keep candles at least one foot away from anything that can burn.



MISSOULA RURAL FIRE DISTRICT

2521 South Avenue West • Missoula, Montana 59804

(406) 549-6172 • FAX (406) 549-6023

www.mrfdfire.org

- Use candle holders that are sturdy and won't tip over easily; put candle holders on a sturdy, uncluttered surface.
- If you smoke, use only fire-safe cigarettes and smoke them outside. (Most smoking-related deaths result from fires that started in living rooms, family rooms, dens and bedrooms.)
- Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, and other smoking materials in a locked cabinet that's up high out of sight and reach of children.
- Use a deep, sturdy ashtray and place it away from anything that can burn.
- Before you throw away butts and ashes, make sure they are out by dousing them in water or sand. Do not discard cigarettes in vegetation such as mulch, potted plants or landscaping, peat moss, dried grasses, leaves or other things that could ignite easily.

Listen: Make sure your home is adequately equipped with working smoke alarms by taking the following steps:

- Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home, in each bedroom, and outside all sleeping areas.
- Test smoke alarms monthly to make sure they're working. Replace smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old.
- Interconnect your smoke alarms so that when one smoke alarm sounds, they all do.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows what your smoke alarms sound like.

Learn two ways out of every room and make sure all doors and windows leading outside open easily and are free of clutter.

Develop an escape plan with all members of your family. A home escape plan includes:

- Two ways out of every room, usually a door and a window;
- An outside meeting-place a safe distance in front of your home where everyone will meet.
- Practice your plan with everyone in your home at least twice a year.

MRFD reminds everyone that fire safety is a year-round task and while Fire Prevention Week is a great time to be reminded about fire safety, citizens must remain vigilant at all times to prevent fires and injuries. For additional information regarding National Fire Prevention Week or other fire and life safety topics please contact MRFD at 406-549-6172 or follow the link to the National Fire Protection Association website, <https://www.nfpa.org/>.