



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**  
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### **Fire & Rescue System Request Your Assistance in Preventing Outside Fires**

Outside fires, often caused by human activities, pose a significant threat to structures and human life. As the weather becomes warmer, grass, leaves, and mulch become drier due to temperature conditions and lack of rainfall; therefore, they become flammable making outside fires more prevalent. These flammable materials are prime locations for fires due to improper discarding of smoking materials, by pedestrians, in or near a residence, business, and grassy/wooded areas or from motor vehicles. With a flick of a cigarette and/or other lighted products, these materials ignite, smolder, and produce an open flame, which can easily extend up and into a structure destroying property and lives. Temperatures, produced by these combustibles, are enough to ignite adjacent combustible wall finishes, especially vinyl siding, located on the exterior of the building.

Prince William County firefighters have responded to numerous outside fires like the incident that occurred this past Sunday in Montclair. The fire, ignited by improper disposal of smoking materials, heavily damaged four townhomes and displaced ten residents. In an effort to minimize those types of fires, we're seeking your assistance to help us help you in preventing outside fires by following these simple safety tips:

#### **Proper Disposal of Smoking Materials**

- **NEVER** smoke in bed.
- **NEVER** smoke around a medical oxygen tank.
- **NEVER** discard smoking materials such as cigarettes, cigars and lighted matches in plant pots, mulch-laden landscapes, flowerbeds, shrubs, bushes, grassy areas, or woods.
- Protect your home or business by providing:
  - An area for individuals to properly extinguish and discard their smoking materials in a fire-retardant material such as glass, heat-resistant plastic, pottery, metal, or stone:
  - An ashtray that is large, wide, deep, and sturdy to prevent smoking materials from igniting nearby combustibles.
- When smoking outside on a porch, deck, or patio:
  - **Never** dispose of smoking materials on the ground.

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- Dispose of smoking materials in a container filled with sand or water.
  - Make sure cigarettes and ashes are out – **Put It Out. All the Way. Every Time.**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvPmGZeRkQ0-more->
- Before emptying an ashtray, fill the ashtray with water to be sure the cigarette and ashes are wet and extinguished then empty into the trash can.

### **Landscaping**

- Provide a reasonable amount of space between flammable vegetation and your home or business to create a fire-wise/fire-safe area.
- It is highly recommended to avoid the use of mulch within 18" of a structure with combustible siding.
- Avoid using highly combustible plants; use fire resistant plants (*visit your local nursery for assistance*).
- Remove dead plants, trees and shrubs, wood, debris, and low tree branches.
- Keep plants watered during the heat of the summer.
- Remove small trees and plants growing under trees; they permit ground fires to jump into the tree crown.
- Stack firewood at least 30 feet from your home.
- Provide proper clearance to electric devices, e.g., decorative lights.

### **Additional Safety Tips**

Most homes and businesses have exterior water faucets/spouts, purchase a hose(s) that will allow you to not only water your landscape but also serve as a fire hose. In the event fire occurs among your landscape, the fire hose will help to saturate the area with water, in an attempt, to prevent the fire from further spreading to vegetation surrounding your home or business.

Chief Tim Keen, of the Prince William County Fire and Rescue System, states, "Whether at home or on the go, if you discover an outside fire, Call 911 Immediately!"

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