Starkville Fire Department Encourages Fire Safety Throughout October

This year's Fire Prevention Month focuses on **lithium-ion battery and charging safety**, an increasingly important issue as more households use smartphones, laptops, power tools, e-bikes, scooters and other battery-powered devices.

The Starkville Fire Department encourages everyone to follow several basic charging precautions. Always use the charger designed for the device, follow the manufacturer's instructions, and avoid using batteries or chargers that are damaged, swollen, leaking or unusually hot. Devices should be charged on a hard, stable surface and never under a pillow, on a bed or on a couch. Charging devices should also be kept away from exits and areas where they could prevent someone from escaping during an emergency.

Residents are encouraged to avoid charging devices while sleeping or when they are away from home. When a battery or device shows signs of damage or abnormal operation, discontinue its use and follow the manufacturer's recommendations for proper disposal.

Make Sure Your Smoke Alarms Work

Smoke alarms remain one of the most important tools for protecting families from fire. The Starkville Fire Department encourages residents to have working smoke alarms throughout their homes and to test them regularly.

If you do not have working smoke alarms in your home, please reach out to the Starkville Fire Department. We may be able to assist by providing smoke alarms to help make your home safer.

Every household should also have a fire escape plan. Families should identify two ways out of each sleeping area when possible, keep exits and hallways clear, establish a meeting place outside and practice the plan with everyone in the household.

When a smoke alarm sounds, **get out and stay out**. Never return to a burning building to retrieve belongings, pets or other items.

Cooking and Heating Safety

Cooking is one of the most common sources of residential fires. Residents should remain in the kitchen while cooking, keep anything that can burn away from cooking appliances and keep children and pets away from hot surfaces.

If a small grease fire occurs, never throw water on it. If it is safe to do so, turn off the heat and carefully cover the pan with a lid. If the fire grows or you are unsure what to do, leave the home and call 911.

As cooler weather approaches, residents should also remember that heating equipment can create significant fire hazards. Portable heaters should be kept at least three feet away from anything that can burn and should be turned off when leaving a room or going to bed.

Fire Safety in Apartments and Student Housing

With Starkville's large student population and the number of apartments and multi-family residences throughout the community, fire safety in these buildings is particularly important.

Residents should know the location of their building's exits and identify more than one way to leave the building. Hallways, stairways and exit doors should never be blocked. Residents should never disable smoke alarms, tamper with fire protection equipment or prop open fire doors.

Everyone should know their exact location when calling 911 and be prepared to provide as much information as possible to emergency dispatchers.

Don't Forget Carbon Monoxide

Fire safety also includes protecting your family from carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless gas that can be produced by fuel-burning appliances and equipment.

Never use generators, grills or other fuel-burning equipment inside a home, garage or other enclosed space. Generators should be operated outside and away from doors, windows and other openings.

Homes should also have properly functioning carbon monoxide alarms where appropriate. If a carbon monoxide alarm activates, leave the building and call 911.

Have a Plan Before an Emergency

The Starkville Fire Department also encourages residents to develop a household emergency plan. Families should discuss how they will communicate during an emergency, where they will meet if they become separated and how they will assist children, elderly family members, individuals who may require additional assistance and pets.

Residents should also understand that different emergencies may require different responses. Some situations may require evacuation, while others may require people to shelter in place. Pay attention to emergency alerts and follow instructions provided by emergency officials.

Prevention Starts With All of Us

If your home needs smoke alarms or you have questions about fire safety, we encourage you to contact the Starkville Fire Department. Our goal is to help our community be prepared before an emergency occurs.

Fire prevention starts before the fire starts. Take the time today to make your home, your workplace and your community safer.

Starkville Fire Department-662-323-1845
Service Before Self