



ALLEGANY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Office of The Board of County Commissioners

701 Kelly Road, Cumberland, MD 21502

(301) 777-5912 FAX (301) 777-5819 www.gov.allconet.org

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Jacob C. Shade, *President*

Creade V. Brodie, Jr.

William R. Valentine

David A. Eberly, *County Administrator*

William M. Rudd, *Attorney*

ALLEGANY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

NEWS RELEASE

May 5, 2017

For Information Contact:

Bretta Reinhard

Public Information Officer

Allegany County Government

701 Kelly Road

Cumberland, MD 21502-2882

T 301-777-2526 X124

F 301-724-6970

breinhard@alleganygov.org

www.alleganygov.org

Allegany County Department of Emergency Services

FIRE SAFETY

There have been 23 residential fire fatalities in the State of Maryland, from January 1, 2017 to May 3, 2017. Of these fatalities, seven were children (ages 0-14 years); ten were teens and adults (15-64 years); and, six were 65-and-over years of age. Many of these incidents are still under investigation, but in cases where the cause of the fire has been determined, smoking, cooking and heating were the leading causes of fatal residential fires.

The risk of injury or death from fire can be reduced by making sure you have properly installed working smoke alarms. Roughly three out of five fire deaths occur in homes with no smoke alarms or alarms that are not working.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends installing a smoke alarm inside every sleeping room, outside sleeping areas and on every level of the home. All smoke alarms should be tested once a month to make sure the alarm is working. All smoke alarms should be replaced when they reach ten years of service, and replacement smoke alarms can be purchased that use a ten-year battery. Please note that even ten-year battery smoke alarms should still be tested on a monthly basis. For residents who are hard-of-hearing or are deaf, smoke alarms with strobe lights as well as bed shakers can be installed.

Install smoke alarms either on the ceiling or high on the wall. Don't place smoke alarms in the kitchen to reduce false alarms. Smoke alarms should be located at least ten feet away from the kitchen stove or other cooking appliances.

In addition to smoke alarms, keeping doors closed inside the home may slow the spread of smoke, heat and fire. Another crucial element of home fire safety involves making a home escape plan. Every family member needs to know what to do in a fire emergency, such as having two ways out of every room whenever possible as well as having an outside meeting place a safe distance from the home. The plan should be practiced with all family members, and children need to be taught how to escape on their own in case you can't help them.

Allegany County Emergency Services urges all citizens to practice fire safety at all times to reduce the risk of fire. Remember these fire safety precautions:

- Do not smoke when you are sleepy, have been drinking, or have taken medicine that makes you drowsy. Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches and other smoking materials away from children.
- Make sure cigarettes and ashes are out, and never toss hot cigarette butts or ashes in the trash can.
- Do not leave candles, fireplaces and woodstoves unattended when in use.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking. Keep oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging – anything that can catch fire – away from the stovetop.
- Keep combustible objects at least three feet away from portable heating devices. Do not leave a space heater on when you go to bed.
- Establish a “kid-free zone” of at least three feet around portable space heaters, stoves, fireplaces, etc.
- Make sure the fire is completely out in the fireplace before going to bed. Store cooled ashes in a tightly sealed metal container outside the home.

For questions about this Allegany County Department of Emergency Services information, contact Susan M. Lee, Deputy Director, Administration, slee@alleganygov.org, T 301-876-9155, F 301-876-9160, 11400 PPG Road, SE, Cumberland, MD 21502-8718.