

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief John R. Batiste



Office of the State Fire Marshal State Fire Marshal Michael Matlick

Captain Jeff DeVere
Government and Media Relations
(360) 596-4011 – office
(360) 596-4015 – fax
<http://www.wsp.wa.gov>

*****For Immediate Release*****

Date: October 14, 2009
Contact: Deputy State Fire Marshal Melissa Gannie
Office (360) 596-3917

Fire Fatalities on the Rise: Up 35%

Early figures for 2009 show an increase of 35% over the previous year for the number of fire fatalities reported to the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Currently, 42 fire fatalities have been reported this year as compared to 31 for the same time period in 2008.

“Practicing fire safety can prevent fires and dramatically reduce fire deaths,” says State Fire Marshal Michael Matlick. “Every household needs working smoke alarms and to practice a home escape plan. Fire sprinklers are another life saving feature home owners and renters should consider. They are like having a 24-hour firefighter standing guard to protect you if a fire were to start,” says Matlick.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal offers the following tips to help households stay fire safe:

Smoke Alarms

- **INSTALL** smoke alarms near each sleeping area and on each level of your home. Follow the manufacturer’s installation and maintenance instructions.
- **TEST** your smoke alarms each month to ensure they are working.
- **MAINTAIN** -The batteries should be changed annually. When an alarm is chirping, this indicates that the battery is low and needs to be replaced. Clean your smoke alarm using a vacuum and/or dust brush without removing the alarm’s cover.
- **REPLACE** any smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old.

Home Escape Plan

Knowing what to do to save life and property in the event of fire may be the most important protection you can provide. Develop a home escape plan that includes:

- Sounding the smoke alarms to ensure everyone is familiar their sound.
- Knowing two ways out of each room.

- Establishing a meeting place outside the building. Once outside call the fire department from a neighbor's phone and do not go back inside the burning building.
- Practicing and updating the plan periodically.

Fire Sprinkler Installations

Installation - Commercial or residential automatic sprinkler systems should be installed by a licensed contractor who is familiar with Washington State fire codes, standards, and local fire safety regulations.

For more information, please visit our website at www.wsp.wa.gov.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State including inspections of state licensed facilities, plan review of school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington State's firefighters, and collecting emergency response data.

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PREVENT FIRES
IT'S YOUR JOB!

