

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 7, 2020



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NATIONAL ARSON AWARENESS WEEK

SUFFOLK, VA (May 7, 2020) Suffolk Fire & Rescue would like to inform citizens that “National Arson Awareness Week” is recognized from May 3rd through May 9, 2020, and is designed to help reduce the frequency and suffering caused by this serious crime.

This year’s theme, “First Responders: Fire Investigations, Arson Laws and You!” highlights the crucial role that firefighters play in a successful fire investigation. Firefighters aren’t only first responders to the fire, but to the fire investigation, as well.

According to the United States Fire Administration, an estimated 210,300 fires are intentionally set each year. Losses resulting from these fires included approximately 375 civilian deaths, 1,300 civilian injuries, and \$1 billion in direct property damage.

“Arson is a serious problem and crime that not only causes damage to property and costs people their lives across our nation daily, but also needlessly puts firefighters in danger. Every citizen can play a role in helping to combat this crime

by reporting suspicious persons and activities that may result in arson.”, said Fire Marshal Chuck Chapin.

The following actions can help reduce the risk of arson:

- Keep combustibles including leaves, firewood, overgrown brush and shrubbery away from buildings.
- Keep doors and windows locked when a building is unoccupied. Board up abandoned buildings. Do not use double cylinder deadbolt locks without keeping a key nearby, bars without quick release mechanisms, or other security provisions that could trap a person in a building with a deadly fire.
- Report suspicious activity near houses or other buildings to the Suffolk Police Department.
- Store all flammable liquids such as; paints, gasoline, and mowers in an approved storage location: locked cabinets, locked storage units, and locked garages (prevent access to kids). Also, keep flammable liquids away from heat sources such as furnaces and any type of heaters.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach and out of sight of young children. If you suspect a child is setting fires, notify the Suffolk Fire & Rescue Fire Prevention Bureau so that trained officials can provide educational and intervention assistance before potential life-threatening problems occur.
- If you know or suspect that an arson crime has been committed, contact Suffolk Fire & Rescue and the Suffolk Police Department.

For more information on fire safety, please contact the Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department at 757-514-4550, or email fireprevbureau@suffolkva.us.

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