

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE _____

May 2, 2022



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NATIONAL ARSON AWARENESS WEEK

SUFFOLK, VA (May 2, 2022) Suffolk Fire & Rescue would like to inform citizens that National Arson Awareness Week is recognized from May 1 through May 7, 2022. Each year for Arson Awareness Week, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) gathers and shares information to raise awareness of arson or youth firesetting to provide the fire service and community residents with strategies to combat these problems in their community.

This year's theme, set by the USFA, is, "Arson in Homeless Communities: Engagement – Education – Outreach". The goal is to provide information on arson as it relates to our nation's homeless population, using a community risk reduction holistic approach to address fire and life safety in this quickly growing risk area.

Suffolk Fire & Rescue provides the following informative and helpful general fire prevention safety information, in addition to ways we all can help reduce the risk of arson:

- Keep your home safe by regularly inspecting it for fire hazards, having working smoke alarms on every level, and inside and outside all sleeping areas. Keep your family safe by planning and practicing your home fire escape plan.
- 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. Teach your child that fire is dangerous. Even small fires can spread very quickly. Fire is a tool, not a toy, and must only be used by adults. 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.

“The reasons individuals commit arson vary greatly. Regardless of the motivation, people need to realize the severity of the crime they are committing and the detrimental impact their actions will undoubtedly have on the lives and property of other innocent victims. If you ever have arson or other fire related information, regardless of how insignificant you think it may be, call the Crime Line at 1-888-LOCK-U-UP or submit a tip using the P3 Tips app at www.p3tips.com”, said Fire Marshal Chris Cornwell with the Suffolk Fire & Rescue 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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