Fire Safety and Prevention Guidelines

(provided by Tony Blake of White Cross Fire Department)

Install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms near every bedroom in the home (or in the bedroom if sleeping with the door closed), tested monthly and replaced after 10 years. A smoke alarm battery should not be borrowed for some other use.

Know at least two safe escape routes out of each bedroom (if possible) and out of the house. Plan and practice escape routes from the home and plan an outside location where the entire family will meet. Choose a meeting place a safe distance from your home that everyone will remember.

Keep storage areas clear of newspapers, rubbish and other combustible materials. Store oily, greasy rags in labeled, sealed, non-glass containers. A metal container is best. Empty it often.

Keep you dryer vent clean and free of lint buildup. Along with the vent, check the screen in the dryer itself, which gets clogged with a waxy buildup from dryer sheets. Run it under the tap, if water does not flow freely then air can’t either. A soft brush, soap & water should remove the waxy buildup.

If you use a kerosene heater, use it in well-ventilated areas and at least three feet away from any combustibles. Place heaters where they will not block an escape route or be knocked over.

Stay in the kitchen at all times when cooking If you must leave the room even for a short period of time, turn off the stove. When you are simmering, baking or roasting food, check it regularly, stay in the home and use a timer to remind you.

If you have young children, use the stove back burners whenever possible. Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the stove.

Keep potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, and other flammables away from the stovetop. When you cook, wear clothing with tight-fitting sleeves.

Clean up food and grease from burners, stovetops, and grills.

Maintain portable fire extinguishers with "ABC" ratings on their labels in homes and place them in easily accessible locations in kitchens, garages, basements and cars.

Check and replace worn, old or damaged cords and wiring. Don't overload extension cords, keep electrical appliances away from water and unplug all appliances while away from home.

Never burn charcoal in the stove or fireplace and minimize the use of paper to build a fire.

Never close the damper with hot ashes in the fireplace and be sure the fire is out before leaving the house or going to sleep.

Clean your chimneys flues. Scratch the black surface above the damper (smoke chamber). If it’s 1/8 in. thick, schedule a cleaning soon. If you have 1/4 in. of creosote, do not use the fireplace again until it is cleaned—a chimney fire could occur.

Keep matches and cigarette lighters away from young children's reach. Use large, deep ashtrays and empty those ashtrays often.

Maintain air space around TV sets and stereos to prevent overheating.