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## **Neighborhood Watch Newsletter** Nov/Dec 2016

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### **Grants Pass Department Of Public Safety**

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**Contact Information:**

**Non-Emergency**

**541-450-6260**

**Fire**

**541-450-6200**

**City Hall**

**541-450-6000**



### **Chimney Fire Safety**

A clean chimney can help prevent fires and structural damage to your property. Regular cleaning of your chimney or flues will eliminate the build up of soot and clear obstructions such as bird or animal nests, leaves and debris. You will also reduce emissions into the atmosphere by assisting the complete combustion of the fuel.

It is not sufficient to use a vacuum cleaner and you should ensure your chimney flue is inspected regularly to prevent fires breaking out. Remember that fire guards can prevent serious injury or death and spark guards can prevent a serious fire.

Chimneys should be swept:

At least once a year when using smokeless fuels

At least once a year when using bituminous coal

Every three months when using wood

Once a year when using oil

Once a year when using gas.

Prevention:

Don't use flammable liquids such as petrol or paraffin to light your fire.

Don't burn paper or rubbish.

Do not overload the fire with fuel.

Go into the loft occasionally, when the fire is alight, to check for smoke from cracks, defective brickwork or mortar joints.

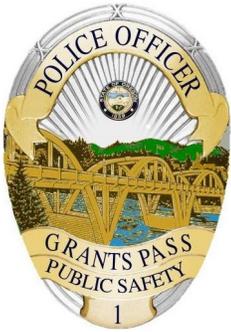
If a chimney fire happens:

Leave the room, close the door and alert other people in the house

Get out of the house, call 911 and ask for the fire & rescue service.

Stay out until the fire and rescue service arrive.

Always ensure you have a working smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector.



## E.D.I.T.H.

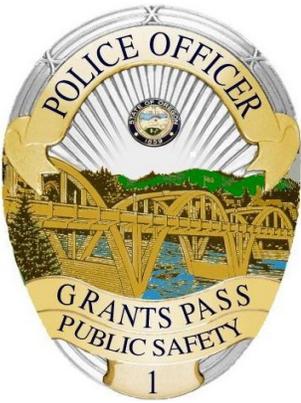
### Exit Drills In The Home

When the smoke alarm sounds, get out and stay out! Eighty percent of fire deaths happen in the home. That's why you need working smoke alarms and a plan to get out of the home in case of fire.

The Grants Pass Department of Public Safety Fire Prevention Bureau wants you to make a home escape plan. Get everyone in your home together and find all the doors and windows that lead outside. Make sure they open easily. Windows or doors with security bars, grills or window guards should have emergency release devices so they can be used for escape.

Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible. One way out will be the door and the second way out may be a window or another door. Stairways and other ways out should be clear of furniture and clutter. Choose a meeting place a safe distance from the home where everyone should meet once they've escaped. Have a plan for anyone in your home who may need assistance to escape, such as young children, older adults or people with disabilities. Make sure everyone knows how to call 9-1-1.

Practice your plan with everyone in your home at least twice a year. Push the smoke alarm button to start the drill. Close doors behind you as you leave and go to your meeting place outside. Practice your escape plan night and day and practice using different ways out.



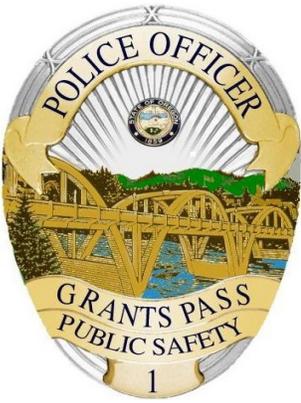
Crawl low under smoke: Smoke contains deadly gases and heat. During a fire, cleaner air will be near the floor. If you find smoke, use another exit; if you must exit through the smoke, crawl on your hands and knees as low as you can. If you are trapped, close as many doors between you and the fire. Use cloth to seal the cracks around the door to keep out smoke. Wait at the window and signal for help with a light colored cloth or flashlight and voice. If there is a phone in the room call 9-1-1 and tell them where you are.

Test doors: Kneel at the door, reach up as high as you can and touch the door, the knob and the crack between the door and its frame with the back of your hand. If this area feels warm, use another escape route. If the area feels cool, open it cautiously. Put your shoulder against the door and open slowly. Slam it shut if there is smoke or flame on the other side.

Stay out: Once you are out, don't go back inside for any reason! The heat and smoke are overpowering. Stay at the meeting place so you can inform rescuers of what is going on. If you must leave the meeting place to get help, return as soon as you can so people are not looking for you.

Have working smoke alarms and install them on every level of your home, inside each bedroom and outside each sleeping area. Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they will all sound. Make sure everyone knows what your smoke alarms sound like and can hear the sound of the smoke alarms. Test your smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button.

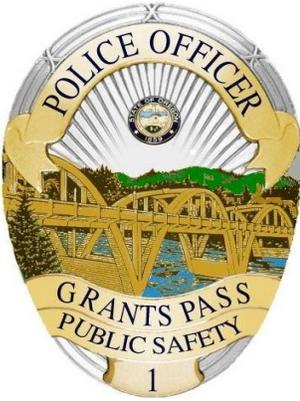
You can contact the Grants Pass Department of Public Safety Fire Prevention Bureau at 541-450-6200 with any questions.



## Holiday Cooking Safety Tips

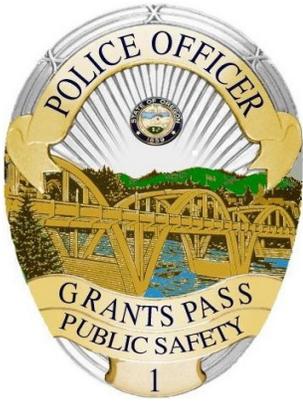
Thanksgiving is the holiday that brings people together with the family dinner being the highlight of the day. The United States Fire Administration estimates more than 2,000 residential fires are reported each Thanksgiving, with cooking the leading cause (69%). Use these tips to help keep your holiday safe:

- Stay in the kitchen while food is cooking. Most fires in the kitchen occur because food is left unattended.
- Keep the cooking range free of clutter. Even though you have a myriad of dishes to prepare, don't overload a cook top with too many pots and pans. Trying to cook all your dishes at once could cause grease to accidentally spill onto a range top and cause a fire.
- Always keep a potholder, oven mitt and lid handy while cooking. If a small fire starts in a pan on the stove, put on a flame-resistant oven mitt and smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan. Turn off the burner. Don't remove the lid until the food has cooled.
- When removing lids on hot pans, tilt them away from you to protect your face and hands from steam. If there is an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed to prevent flames from burning you or your clothing.
- Never wear loose fitting clothing when cooking. Long, open sleeves could ignite and catch fire from a gas flame or a hot burner. Wear short, close fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. If you have long hair, be sure to tie it back.
- Keep smoke alarms connected while cooking. Smoke alarms can save lives. Make sure they are installed and working properly.



- Unplug small appliances that aren't in use. Not only will you save the energy, but you will also avoid the potential dangers if they were to be turned on accidentally.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen in case of emergency and know how to use it. Make sure the fire extinguisher is UL listed and rated for grease and electrical fires.
- Avoid using a turkey fryers, which pose a number of distinct safety concerns, including burn and fire hazards. If you still choose to fry your turkey, follow these safety guidelines recommended by Consumer Safety Product Commission:
  - Keep fryer in FULL VIEW while burner is on
  - Place fryer in an open area AWAY from all walls, fences, or other structures
  - Never use IN, ON, or UNDER a garage, breezeway, carport, porch, or any structure that can catch fire
  - Raise and lower food SLOWLY to reduce splatter and avoid burns
  - COVER bare skin when adding or removing food
  - Check the oil temperature frequently
  - If oil begins to smoke, immediately turn gas supply OFF
  - If a fire occurs, immediately call 911. DO NOT attempt to extinguish fire with water.

Above all, just apply your own common sense around safety in the kitchen. If in doubt about something, always err on the side of caution.



## SCAMS

The Grants Pass Department of Public Safety has received numerous calls from concerned citizens regarding phone calls and mail they have received from what appear to be legitimate businesses. The mail they are receiving contains a letter explaining that they have won a prize/money, or have been chosen to participate in some event where they will receive a small fee for their participation.

Often a check will be enclosed with the business name on it. The check appears valid and legitimate if it is deposited. The letter further directs the recipient to deposit the check, then purchase 'Green Dot Cards' which are prepaid credit cards. The company requests that those cards be mailed to them, and the recipient keeps the rest of the money that was deposited. After the victims have cashed the check, mailed the green dot cards and spent their earnings, the bank informs them that the check was not legitimate and the victim is out that money.

If you receive a check in the mail or a phone call requesting money, consider these points:

If this business is one known to you, verify their information by contacting a number for them. Do not assume that the number the caller provides is an accurate one.

Most utility companies will not request that you pay in cash or with a pre paid card.

If you have not contacted the company before, it is highly likely that you will be the victim of a scam if you participate. If it appears too good to be true, it usually is.

If you have not heard of the business or company before, get to know everything about the company. Contact the Better Business Bureau, your local police department, your bank or an attorney.

Do not rely on the information given in the letter. Often times the suspects may be using the name of a legitimate company, using stolen checks or checking account numbers, or using an untraceable but legitimate phone number. Once the suspects have your information, they will not stop calling and may even threaten you and your family with criminal charges or civil lawsuits until you provide them with the money.

Verify all of the information before sending any money. If the caller or individual is purporting to be a family member, contact additional family to determine their location.

If you have any questions, please contact Officer Lesley Donaghy, Grants Pass Department of Public Safety Crime Prevention Bureau at 450-6245.