

## **FIRE PREVENTION**

### **MISSION:**

The mission of the Fire Prevention Division is to administer the City's fire and life safety awareness and fire code enforcement programs through proper community awareness, fire and life safety inspections and investigations.

The Deputy Fire Marshal is responsible for making inspections in all commercial businesses in the city, and also (by invitation) inspects homes. The deputy Fire Marshal also checks building plans, conducts Certificate of Occupancy inspections, issues fire system and related permits, conducts safety classes and other educational offerings. The Deputy Fire Marshal conducts and coordinates fire scene investigations with the Fire Chief and Investigations Team.

Deputy Fire Marshal:

Luiz Valdez, EMT/P

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### **CANDLES**

- Today we find pretty candles everywhere, from dedicated candle stores to supermarkets to the fundraising items for our schools. Candles can be found in beautiful holders, sweet scented and artfully constructed. They are sought out for a variety of reasons from dinner hostess to religious observers. Yet, a lit candle's grace and beauty - it's open flame - can unintentionally cause serious harm when fire safety concerns play second fiddle to ambiance.
- While the incidence of home fires in the nation appear to be dropping steadily, it appears that fires started by candles is increasing. A companion study, co-written by the National Fire Protection Association, clearly shows that in one state, candle fires have tripled in the last decade.
- The candle as an art form, mood setter or religious item is fine, generally speaking. None of us advocates outlawing candles in the home. But, lit candles have no place in our home when we leave them alone or fall asleep. It's that simple.
- Most candle fires start when candles are left unattended, abandoned or inadequately controlled, or because they are placed too close to combustible materials, or children play with them.
- Keep in mind some simple safety tips for lit candles: supervise them constantly, use sturdy noncombustible holders, keep them away from windows, curtains and other combustibles such as decorations and make sure they are positioned so that children and pets can't knock them over.
- Candles are pretty and warming, but the last thing any of us wants to read about is another preventable fire and another painful tragedy.

### **PERMITS & FEES**

The City requires permits for all construction of fire protection systems, fire alarms, and certain hazardous operations and processes. All instructions are available on the applications and within the fee schedule. Applications are available for download and printing.

## **Fire System Construction Application**

## **Hazardous Operations Application**

## **Fee Schedule**

Completed applications should be submitted to the Leon Valley Planning and Development Office at City Hall, 6400 El Verde Road, San Antonio, Texas 78238 (210) 684-7836.

Questions concerning fire permits should be directed to Deputy Fire Marshal Luiz Valdez.

## **BUSINESS FIRE INSPECTIONS**

The fire department performs fire inspections in all commercial and public buildings on a regular basis. These inspections are performed in an effort to ensure the highest safety standards in all publicly accessible buildings within the city. The inspections determine compliance with applicable laws and ordinances.

Most business will pass inspections if:

- Fire extinguisher(s) are mounted on a wall in a visible location, and have a current inspection tag from a licensed fire safety equipment firm.
- Exits are unlocked during business hours and are unobstructed.
- Occupancy limit sign is posted.
- Certificate of Occupancy permit is posted.
- Emergency lighting is present and functional.
- Exit signs are illuminated.
- General Housekeeping - the premises is free of trash and clutter.
- Building address is marked on front of structure, 6" (min.) high contrasting numbers

## **HOME FIRE INSPECTIONS**

Upon request, the Leon Valley Fire Department will conduct a fire safety survey of your home and property free of charge.

The Fire Safety Survey includes:

- A full evaluation of any hazards present in the home or property.
- Recommendations for corrective actions needed to prevent fires or other accidents in the future.
- Testing of the smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector.
- Assistance in developing a fire safety evacuation plan for the entire family.

## **SMOKE DETECTOR PROGRAM**

All dwelling units (homes, hotels and apartments) are required by city code to have a smoke detector(s).

The Fire Department will, at no charge, check your smoke detector to make sure that it is working properly. Also, if you need help installing your smoke detector or changing the batteries, the Fire Department will help you do that.

Residents of Leon Valley who cannot afford to install a smoke detector in their home should contact the Fire Department. Smoke detectors are available at no cost if you cannot afford to buy one.

Smoke detectors and batteries are available for sale at our cost from the Leon Valley Fire Department.

### **FIRE EXTINGUISHER CLASSES**

Fire Department personnel offer classes in the proper installation, maintenance and use of fire extinguishers.

The classes include information on the proper selection of the type of extinguisher to use and the proper technique for extinguishing a fire with the extinguisher.

Classes are held on an as-needed basis. Contact the Fire Department for more information.

### **HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST**

In order to make your home fire safe for your family, the Fire Department offers the following ideas and suggestions:

Maintain at least two charged fire extinguishers for the home, one in the garage and one near the kitchen.

Maintain at least two exits from each part of the home.

Have a family escape plan and practice periodically (see EDITH).

Make sure that every sleeping area has an operating smoke detector, and if the home has two stories that there is at least one detector upstairs and one downstairs.

Smoke detectors should be replaced every 10 years. Batteries should be replaced every 6 months, and the detector should be checked monthly for proper operation.

Do not store flammable liquids, such as gasoline, near the water heater or any gas or electric heating devices.

Flammable liquids must be stored in approved containers with proper labels, out of the reach of children.

Keep the home clean and uncluttered with trash - remove waste regularly.

Keep grass, weeds and trees trimmed around the home to ensure that a fire in the yard does not burn into the home.

Make sure gas-fired appliances are vented properly and inspected regularly.

Have the chimney of your home inspected and cleaned at least annually. If you are a frequent user of your fireplace or wood stove, you may have to inspect and clean your chimney more often.

Keep combustibles such as clothing, curtains, papers, furniture, etc., at least three feet away from fireplace, wood stove or any other heating appliance, such as a space heater.

Space heaters should be used only on the floor, where they cannot fall or be easily overturned. Electric heaters should be equipped with a device that turns them off if they are knocked over.

Space heaters should be turned off when the occupants go to sleep.

Do not use the stove or oven to heat the home or a room.

Ash that is removed from fireplace should be removed and placed in a metal container outside the home. The ash must be allowed to cool for several days to ensure it is completely cold before disposal.

Do not leave the stove unattended when cooking.

Do not store flammable liquids near or above the kitchen stove.

Do not allow small children near the stove/oven when it is in use.

When operating a stove, do not wear loose clothing that could come into contact with the flame or burner and catch fire.

Keep paper and plastic items away from the stove top.

Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.

Cigarette stubs can smolder for hours. Do not discard them in the trash. Be certain all the cigarettes in ashtrays are extinguished completely before disposal.

Do not smoke in bed.

Do not place ashtrays on the arms or furniture where they may fall off or be knocked off. Always check furniture where smokers have been sitting to ensure that all smoking materials have been properly disposed of.

While cooking, keep a lid handy that can be used to cover the pan and smother a fire.

Have the electrical system of your home inspected regularly by a licensed electrician.

Have your central air conditioner/heater serviced and inspected annually by a licensed service company.

## **FIRE CODE**

The City of Leon Valley has adopted the 2003 International Fire Code.

## **EDITH (Exit Drills In The Home) (Courtesy NFPA)**

You and your family can survive a fire in your home if you plan ahead and practice what to do.

1. Plan your escape.

- a. Draw a floor plan of your home.
  - b. Show two ways out of each room.
  - c. Be sure that children can unlock windows and open all the doors.
  - d. If windows or doors are equipped with burglar bars, be sure that they are equipped with quick-release devices and that everyone knows how to operate them.
  - e. Agree on an outside meeting place where your family can gather after you have escaped.
  - f. Plan to call the fire department from a neighbor's house.
2. Practice the escape.
- a. Hold home fire drills.
  - b. Make drills realistic and pretend some exits are blocked by smoke or fire.
  - c. Once your family has escaped, do not allow anyone to go back inside a burning building.
3. Escape Tips.
- a. Close doors behind you as you escape to slow the spread of fire.
  - b. Crawl low in smoke, keeping your head low where the air has less smoke.
  - c. Test doors and doorknobs for heat with the back of your hand before opening the door. If it is warm, try another escape route. If it is cool. Open the door slowly. Close the door immediately if there is a lot of smoke and try another exit.

## **LEON VALLEY FIRE SAFETY AWARD**

In order to recognize businesses within Leon Valley that consistently display a safe environment for their patrons and employee's, and in order to award those that set an excellent example of fire safety for others to follow, the Leon Valley Fire Department has established the Fire Safety Award.

### **General Guidelines**

Although every nomination will be considered, there are other requirements that must be fulfilled to receive the Fire Safety Award. Some of the criteria include the following:

- (1) Clearly legible address numerals that are visible from the roadway.
- (2) All EXIT signs and emergency lights must be working.
- (3) No use of extension cords in place of permanent wiring.
- (4) No broken electrical outlet covers or receptacles.
- (5) All fire extinguishers shall have current service tags.
- (6) No exits shall be blocked or locked during normal business hours.
- (7) All fire protection and fire alarm systems shall be serviced regularly and provided with a current service tag.
- (8) Maintain at least a 36-inch clearance around all circuit breaker panels.
- (9) No storage of combustible materials around the hot water heater.

The nominee must also possess fire safety signs or literature within the working areas of the occupancy for their employees, and participated in at least one fire safety or related training program within the last calendar year.

If you would like to nominate a business in Leon Valley that you feel is deserving of this award, please click on the link below and read the criteria and instructions for submitting the application provided.

If you have any questions or would like further assistance, please feel free to contact Luiz Valdez at (210) 684-3219

***(Insert Link to Instructions and application)***