

## **IT'S FIRE PREVENTION WEEK – HOW SAFE IS YOUR PROPERTY?**

2018 Fire Prevention Week is October 7 to October 13. This year's National Fire Prevention Week theme is "Look. Listen. Learn. Be Aware." Remember, fire can happen anywhere – and it does happen everywhere!

The most devastating fires, in terms of both lives and dollars lost, occur in the home. Please put these best practices to use in your homes, workplace, and the places you visit.

**LOOK:** Take a proactive position to best protect your family and friends. Periodically inspect your work spaces and your home. Fire can destroy them in seconds. Pay special attention to the following:

--40% of fires are electrical in origin. Look at electrical outlets, switches and fuse / circuit breaker panels for evidence of overheating such as browning of surrounding surfaces. Make this a habit; when you plug any electrical appliance in, notice the cover plate and surroundings for evidence of overheating. Have any questionable outlet, switch or circuit protective device checked by a qualified electrician immediately.

--Look how much flammable liquids you have stored in your kitchens, garages, and workshops. Make it a habit to limit flammables to what you truly need. Throw out old paint.

**LISTEN:** Don't ignore or delay responding to alarms. It is human nature to want to investigate whether an alarm is actual or false. Individuals also tend to check with other people if they are evacuating. Fight that inclination and treat all alarms as real, until it is known they are false from a person of authority, such as law enforcement or fire service.

**LEARN:** It is actually a myth that people panic in an emergency. The truth is they make bad decisions because they have not prepared for an emergency situation such as a fire. Take time to educate yourself and your family on how fast fire can grow, the importance of knowing two ways out, and how to use a fire extinguisher. Many local fire departments across the nation will be holding open houses in October. Please attend one and learn from the professionals.

**BE AWARE:** When you not in your workplaces or homes, you must rely on the good judgement of others, such as the stadium operators, restaurant owners, hotel managers, school principals, and the officials of similar sites. When visiting a venue, be alert for sights, sounds, or smells of fire or other emergency. Trust your senses and take reasonable actions to protect yourself and others.

The NFPA has a site dedicated to Fire Prevention Week with handouts, tip sheets, video, and activities at

<https://www.nfpa.org/fpw>. Please take a few minutes to visit the site and share what you learned with friends, family and co-workers. Be Safe.

MEL Safety Institute offers online Fire Safety Training. In just 30 minutes you'll learn basic fire safety principles, the recognition and prevention of potential fire hazards, and proper emergency procedures. Here is the flyer link: <https://njmel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/FIRE-PREVENTION2-MELJIF.pdf>