



# Midlothian Fire Department – Fire Prevention Bureau

*Martin J. Rita*

**Fire Chief**

*Michael Lonkar*

**Fire Prevention Officer**

## September Fire Safety / Information

As the fall season brings cooler temperatures outside, inside things are warming up. During the fall and winter months fire hazards in your home or business stem largely from heating the space. According to the American Red Cross there is even a drastic increase in the amount of US house fires during this time.

1. Replace the batteries in your smoke alarms & locate fire extinguishers.
2. Develop a home fire safety and evacuation plan.
3. Bring fire safety to work through proper training and a post-fire recovery plan.
4. Check your Heating System!

### **Here are a few things you can do to reduce the risk of furnace fires:**

Regularly replace furnace filters.

Keep all areas around the furnace clean and unobstructed.

Keep the burner area clean and clear of debris.

Keep all combustible items at least six-inches away from the vent pipe.

Never close off more than 20% of heat registers.

If there are any issues with your heating system, contact a professional immediately. For preventative care, have your central heating system cleaned and serviced by a certified HVAC contractor once annually.

### **Additionally, here are a few things you can do to enhance fireplace safety:**

Use a fireplace screen, guard, or glass doors to keep hot ash and sparks contained.

Store extra wood, and other types of combustible materials, at least five-feet away from your fireplace.

Never leave a fire unattended.

Burn seasoned hardwoods, such as oak, that have been split and stored in a safe and dry environment for at least six-months.

Keep fires small – Never overload your fireplace.

When building a fire, strategically place logs on a metal grate at the back end of your fireplace; always use kindling to ignite fire.

By following these simple tips and putting in the time to create a safe environment, you'll be able to sit back and enjoy the pleasant summer weather.

### **Get the Kids Involved**

Teach them how, and when, to dial 911 (make sure little ones know their address, too). Ask them often if they can recall the safety evacuation plan you've discussed. Make them learn the stop, drop, and roll method for extinguishing a fire on themselves or escaping beneath a fire.



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## **Additional Fire Safety Tips & Considerations**

Perform a DIY home inspection, then break out the leaf blower and rake! Something as simple as a pile of leaves can be the catalyst for a fire. Take a couple of hours, and clean your gutters, check your downspouts, and remove all leaves and debris from the perimeter of your space.

Know the burning regulations and requirements in your area and never burn leaves or trash on an exceptionally windy day.

Never park your vehicle over a pile of leaves. The heat emitted from your car can ignite the leaves, destroying your vehicle and all things around it.

After every load of laundry, always clean the dryer vent.

Every season, test your smoke detectors.

On a regular basis, clean your toaster and/or toaster oven to remove crumbs and leftover food.

Get familiar with your homeowner's insurance policy – know what your coverage includes.

Most of these recommendations seem like common sense, right? But as we get busy we don't always put safety in the forefront. When the clocks roll back this fall, take that extra hour to prepare your home or business for a fire-safe fall and winter season.

## **Holidays to Celebrate**

**Labor Day September 1, 2025 - is a federal holiday in the United States celebrated on the first Monday in September to honor and recognize the American labor movement and the works and contributions of laborers to the development and achievements of the United States. The three-day weekend it falls on is called Labor Day Weekend.**

As always, if you have any questions about fire safety or fire prevention, you can always call the Midlothian Fire Department at (708) 489-4742. We are always happy to help! (Call for Fire Prevention Tips.)

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