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[www.pwcgov.org/fire](http://www.pwcgov.org/fire)

## Visiting for the Holidays Is the Home Childproofed



## Community Safety Section Monthly Update

Fire Marshal's Office  
Office of Emergency Management  
Public Information  
Public Education  
Hazardous Materials

Assistant Chief Matt Smolsky  
Prince William County  
Fire Marshal

5 County Complex Court, #160, Prince William, VA 703-792-6360

NOVEMBER 2019

## FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

### NEW CONSTRUCTION & FIRE PROTECTION

22 fire protection plan reviews for sprinkler, fire alarm, underground fire lines, and kitchen hoods.

140 fire protection system inspections, 11 building occupancy inspections, and 6 Operational Permits (HUPs).

### PERMITS, PLANS & SPECIAL INSPECTIONS

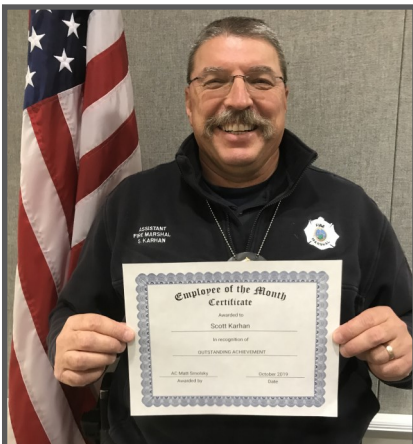
Fire Lane Inspections: 0

Knox Box Inspections: 1

FMO Follow up: 2

Fire Prevention Inspections: 87

### October FMO Team Member of the Month



Captain Scott Karhan

Captain Scott Kahan is the recipient of the FMO Award for October 2019. Captain Karhan is deserving of this award for his continual and tireless efforts in managing the LEO Shifts for both A and B Shifts. After a couple of promotions from the FMO and while Captain Hubbel was on military deployment, Captain Karhan had to adjust his schedule to provide coverage for both shifts from July through the beginning of October. Although he coordinated coverage with both Battalion Chief Jarman and Assistant Chief Smolsky, Scott worked continuously to ensure not only the needs of the LEOs were met, but the FMO Leadership was kept informed of court cases and incidents. He was also the POC for P1 reporting and case report reviews. Also, during this time, the FMO Records and Evidence project entered Phase 2.

The forward movement of several FMO initiatives and projects would not have been possible without Captain Karhan's dedication and effort. For that work, he truly deserves the monthly award for October 2019 and the coveted "Jimmy Chip."

## Congratulations Lieutenant Bloedel

On Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, Lieutenant Joey Bloedel graduated from the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy Basic Law Enforcement Academy. Family, friends, and leadership from across the Commonwealth gathered to celebrate a significant accomplishment in the Fire Service career for members of the 40th VFMA Basic Law Enforcement class.



Battalion Chief Tom Jarman congratulates Lieutenant Bloedel



Executive Director of Virginia Department of Fire Programs Mike Reilly, Lieutenant Bloedel, and Virginia Secretary of Public Safety & Homeland Security Brian Moran



Lieutenant Bloedel and his family



Lieutenant Bloedel is joined by his peers Captain Hubbel, Lieutenant Miner, and Battalion Chief Jarman.

Visit us at [www.pwcgov.org/fire](http://www.pwcgov.org/fire) and click on the Fire Marshal's Office.



# OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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## What's New in Emergency Management



### Farewell & Best Wishes

On November 6th, Emergency Management (EM) staff said goodbye to Dave Bellew, the Exercise and Training Coordinator. He dedicated 12 years of service, to Emergency Management and the citizens of Prince William County, before moving on to work with Northern Virginia Community College. He will be missed, but we are excited to continue to work with him as a partner in the region.

### Training Exercise

This month EM staff participated in a week-long training exercise for O305 Type 3 All-Hazards Incident Management Teams. The last three days of training were an exercise to contain a measles outbreak in Prince William County. The class included members from Fairfax and Prince William County fire, emergency management, police department, health district, and Virginia Department of Transportation.



EM staff also attended the Northern Virginia Emergency Response System Symposium. The symposium covered a variety of topics, including 4th generation nerve agents, after-action reports from the 2017 Las Vegas shooting, the 2019 Virginia Beach shooting, the Art of Perception, cybersecurity, an overview of Northern Virginia emergency plans, and many more. In addition to covering relevant topics, the symposium was an opportunity for representatives from Northern Virginia to network and discuss regional matters.

Visit the Office of Emergency Management at [www.pwcgov.org/ready](http://www.pwcgov.org/ready) or call 703-792-5627.

# PUBLIC INFORMATION & PUBLIC EDUCATION

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## Recent Decrease in Temperatures Prompts Early Home Heating Use

With the early onset of colder weather, homeowners are seeking alternative and economical methods of keeping warm. The increase in the use of home heating appliances also increases the risk of home heating fires; the second leading cause of U.S. home fires and the third-leading cause of home fire deaths.

Prince William County Fire and Rescue System Chief Tim Keen urges residents to be vigilant when using alternative heating methods by following these simple safety tips to keep you and your loved ones safe and warm:

### FIREPLACES, WOOD STOVES AND OTHER FUEL-FIRED APPLIANCES

Fires that originate from these appliances are referred to as “confined” fires. Wood stoves, the most popular category of wood-burning heaters, causes thousands of residential fires each year. Be sure to:

- Install wood burning stoves following manufacturer’s instructions or have a professional do the installation.
- Keep fireplaces and woodstoves clean.
  - Clean annually by a certified chimney specialist.
- Keep area around fireplace and woodstove clean and free of debris, decorations and flammable materials.
- **ALWAYS** use a metal or heat-tempered glass screen with fireplaces.
- Install spark screens and caps on chimneys.
- Install stovepipe thermometers to monitor flue temperatures.
- Keep air inlets open on woodstoves and fireplaces.
  - If closed, inlets cause creosote buildup and lead to chimney fires.

### **Safely Burn Fuels**

- **NEVER** use flammable liquids to start a fire.
- Use only seasoned wood.
  - Certain types of wood, like soft moist wood, increases creosote buildup.
- Build small fires that burn completely and produce less smoke.
- **NEVER** leave a fire unattended in a fireplace.
- Extinguish fire before leaving the house or going to bed.
- When removing fireplace ashes precautions should be taken to prevent fires or injuries:
  - Wear heavy leather gloves when cleaning embers and ashes out of your fireplace or wood burning stove to protect your hands from any hot embers.
  - **DO NOT** place woodstove or fireplace ashes in paper bags or any other combustible container.
  - Dispose of embers and ashes in a metal container with a lid. (Remember, ashes can remain hot for several days so they should be stored on a noncombustible surface or spread out on the ground at least 10 feet away from your home and any nearby building or combustible material.)

## PORTABLE or SPACE HEATERS

### Kerosene Heaters

- Buy only Underwriter's Laboratory/UL-approved heaters.
- **NEVER** fill your heater with gasoline or camp stove fuel.
  - Both flare-up easily and increase the risk of fire.
  - **Use only fuels appropriate for appliance.**
- Refuel outside and only after heater has cooled.
- **DO NOT** use kerosene heaters in small enclosed areas.
  - Potential for carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.
    - A person can be poisoned by a small amount of CO over a long period of time or by a large amount of CO over a shorter amount of time.
    - Install and maintain CO alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning.
- When using, keep a window ajar or the door open.
- Annually, clean kerosene heaters and replace wicks.

### Electric Space Heaters

- Space heaters account for 2 of every 5 (44%) of home heating fires resulting in 86% of deaths and 78% of injuries.
- Buy only heaters with Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) safety listing.
- Be sure it has a thermostat control mechanism and automatically switches off if tipped over.
- **ALWAYS** unplug when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Avoid using extension cords.
  - **NEVER** use frayed or damaged cords.

Whether you're using a stationary or portable heating appliance:

- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heating equipment, such as the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
  - According to NFPA's 2018 report, "U.S. Home Fires Involving Heating Equipment", fires in which the heat source was too close to combustibles were associated with the largest number of injuries, deaths and property damage.
- Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- **NEVER** use your oven to heat your home.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.

To significantly increase your chances of surviving a fire in your home -- by more than double -- install smoke alarms and sprinklers in the home. In addition, develop and practice a home fire escape plan and be sure everyone is familiar with the plan.

For additional information regarding home heating safety, visit the National Fire Protection Association [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) and the U.S. Fire Administration [www.usfa.fema.gov/](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/).



## Christmas Trees, Decorations & Lights Enjoy the Holidays with Safety in Mind

The Christmas Holiday will soon be upon us and while Christmas trees and decorations add to the holiday spirit, they also pose a risk of fire and injury to many, especially children. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Christmas trees are a major source of fuel in a fire. One out of every 45 reported home Christmas tree fires result in a death compared to an annual average of one death per 139 reported home fires.

### Holiday Lights & Decorative Lighting

Holiday lights and decorative lighting add a festive touch during the holiday season; yet:

- More than one of every four Christmas tree fires is caused by electrical failures or malfunctions and one quarter were due to a form of heat source such as a candle or equipment that were too close to the tree.
- Of home decoration fires, one third were caused by candles; the top four days for home candle fires are Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

### Safety Tips

#### Christmas Tree Safety

- Natural trees always involve some risk of fire. To minimize the risk:
  - **ALWAYS** get a fresh tree and keep it watered.
  - **DO NOT** put the tree within 3 feet of a heat source, i.e. fireplace, space heater, radiator, candles, heat vents or lights.
- **NEVER** use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- **DO NOT** burn tree branches, treated wood or wrapping paper in a home fireplace.
- Remove your tree after Christmas or when it is dry.
  - Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage or placed outside against the home.

#### Holiday Decorating

The Fire Marshal's Office recommends not using candles as a holiday decoration but use battery operated candles as a substitute for real candles; however, should you choose to use real candles, please take the following precautions:

- Put candles in a sturdy metal, glass, or ceramic holders.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches from anything that burns.
- **NEVER** leave a candle unattended.
- Blow out candles after use and before going to bed.
- **NEVER** leave a lit tree or other decorative lighting displays unattended.
- **TURN OFF ALL** decorations before leaving the house or going to bed.
- Inspect and replace lights with exposed or frayed wires, loose connections and broken sockets.

- **DO NOT** overload extension cords or outlets.
- **DO NOT** run an electrical cord under a rug.
- Decorate with children in mind. **DO NOT** put ornaments that have small parts or metal hooks, or look like food or candy, on the lower branches where small children can reach them.
- Keep near each phone the number of the **National Poison Center (800) 222-1222**.
- Trim protruding branches at or below a child's eye level and keep lights out of reach.

### Holiday Plants – Decorative but Toxic

Holiday plants such as Poinsettias, Mistletoe, Holly, Amaryllis, Daffodils, Cyclamen, Jerusalem Cherry, and English Ivy may enliven a room, but they are poisonous to humans and/or pets. When displaying these types of plants, place them in locations that can be admired from a distance yet, unattainable to children and pets.

Prince William County Fire and Rescue System Chief Tim Keen would like to remind residents that holidays were designed to spend memorable moments with family and friends and not visits to the emergency room. Make your holiday a cherished and memorable holiday by preparing and implementing proper precautions.

For more information regarding holiday safety, visit the National Fire Protection Association [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) and the U.S. Fire Administration [www.usfa.fema.gov/](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/).



### Visiting for the Holidays Is the Home Childproofed

As we prepare for the Christmas Holiday, an exciting time of year, the anticipation of spending time with family and friends tends to make the season more delightful. Holiday decorations, new toys, and visiting homes that may not be childproofed can put your child in danger. Although parents believe they are able to watch their children closely, even if the house is not childproofed, this is hard to do when there are numerous people of all ages and various activities taking place throughout the home. Therefore, parents

and guardians should be mindful of their child's safety, when visiting someone's home, for the leading cause of death among children are accidents.

Most parents understand the importance of childproofing one's home such as placing gates across the top and bottom of the stairs, installing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and keeping household poisons out of the reach of children; these are standard practices in the majority of homes with small children. However, there are seasonal risks as well, such as holiday decorations, games, and food and beverages in which younger children can be harmed if the home has not been properly childproofed before the festivities begin and reevaluated during and after the festivities.

Most likely, you will find a home that has not been childproofed when visiting individuals who have never had children or parents/grandparents who no longer have young children residing in the home. In addition to not having general childproofing safety measures such as locks on cabinets, or covers on electrical outlets, these individuals may have prescription medications lying about that are not in child resistant containers. Medications often attract young children due to the variety of colors resembling candy. Therefore, as a parent/guardian you should remain vigilant and request the homeowner(s) keep their medications stored away in places that are not easily accessible to children. As a precautionary measure, learn the poison control number (**1-800-222-1222**) and keep it posted by the phone or listed in your phone contacts in case of an emergency.

Listed below are a few things you should be especially watchful for and/or want to ask about prior to visiting someone's home:

- Do they have a pool? Does it have a fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate? Can the children get to the area where the pool is located?
- Are there guns in the house? Are they stored unloaded in a locked box with the bullets locked separately?
- Are there small objects, such as hard candy or nuts in candy dishes, where younger children can get them?
- Are there gates across the top and bottom of the stairs?
- Are medications, poisons and household cleaners out of reach?
- Do they have an aggressive pet that may harm children?
- If your child has food allergies, will they be serving that specific food?
- Do they smoke? Are matches and lighters out of the reach of children, preferably up high and in a locked cabinet?
- Do they reside in a multi-level home or high-rise apartment? Are there window guards or window stop devices that prevent windows from opening more than 4 inches? Is there a porch or balcony with railings widely spaced apart (more than 4")?

## Toy Safety

- **IMMEDIATELY** discard plastic wrappings from toys.
- Check toys regularly for small parts, breakage and potential hazards, including chipped or peeling paint. Damaged or dangerous toys should be repaired or thrown away.
- Teach older children to keep their toys away from younger children.
- Keep button batteries away from younger children.
  - A child can swallow a button battery and suffer dangerous chemical burns in as little as two hours. **DO NOT** leave products with accessible button batteries within reach of children.

“Holidays should be memorable, fun-filled events to share with family and friends for generations to follow,” states Prince William County Fire & Rescue System Chief Tim Keen. “Take the necessary precautions to keep your loved ones safe during the holiday season and throughout the year.”

For more information on Child Safety Basics for Your Home, visit <https://www.verywellfamily.com/child-safety-2634211>.

For toy safety, education and guides, visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission at <https://www.cpsc.gov/safety-education/safety-guides/toys>.



## December is Safe Toys & Gift Month Be Sure to Choose Wisely

During this time of the year, children become excited in anticipation of the toys they'll receive from Santa, friends and family, yet if not properly selected, toys chosen may cause injury even death. A report released by Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) titled "Toy-Related Deaths and Injuries Calendar Year 2017" ([https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/Toy\\_Report\\_2018.pdf?qI01DVoYhV6IzYgcLa04K28yF28BOgdS](https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/Toy_Report_2018.pdf?qI01DVoYhV6IzYgcLa04K28yF28BOgdS)) states an estimated 251,700 toy-related emergency department-treated injuries and 13 toy-related deaths occurred in 2017 among children younger than 15. Riding toys, specifically, non-motorized scooters were the category of toys associated with the majority of these injuries and half of toy-related deaths.

The CPSC has the most stringent toy safety standards in the world. Due to their collaborative effort with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), who oversees more than 300 of the nation's ports, seized several shipments of unsafe toys, throughout the country, over the past few years, for violating toy standards and containing lead. In July 2017, CBP officers, in Charleston, South Carolina, seized unsafe toys valued at over \$120,000. This year, in July, CBP officers seized approximately \$28,000, in unsafe toys, for violation of the Consumer Product Safety Act. These toys failed to meet federal safety standards and therefore, were prohibited from entry into the U.S. These strict enforcements are good news for shoppers and toy recalls which have been on the decline since 2008 when 172 toys were recalled compared to 18 toys recalled in 2018. (<https://www.cpsc.gov/Safety-Education/Toy-Recall-Statistics>)

December is Safe Toys & Gifts Month. Prince William County Fire and Rescue System Chief Tim Keen, in conjunction with CPSC, urges individuals to carefully select toys prior to purchase in an effort to reduce toy-related injuries and deaths. During the holiday season and throughout the year, follow these simple safety tips when purchasing toys:

- Check the label: Choose age appropriate toys by reading the age label on the toy. Children younger than 3 should not have access to toys with small parts, which can cause choking. Also avoid marbles and small balls for children under 3.
- Get safety gear: With scooters and other riding toys, supervision is key along with proper safety gear that includes helmets. Helmets should be worn properly at all times and they should be sized to fit. Avoid riding a scooter on a street or roadway with other motor vehicles.
- Hoverboards: Although not considered a toy, hoverboards should be compliant with [UL 2272](#) safety standard. Buy from a retailer that requires UL certification as standard. Hoverboards that don't have this certification should be avoided.
- Be careful with magnets: High powered magnet sets are dangerous and should be kept away from children under 14. Building and play sets with small magnets should also be kept away from small children.

### Once Gifts Are Open

- **IMMEDIATELY** discard plastic wrappings from toys.
- Keep toys for older children away from younger children.
- Pay attention to instructions and warnings on battery chargers.
  - Battery charging should be supervised by adults.
  - Chargers and adapters can pose thermal burn hazards to young children.
  - Some chargers lack any mechanism to prevent overcharging.



- Keep button batteries away from younger children.
  - A child can swallow a button battery and suffer dangerous chemical burns in as little as two hours. **DO NOT** leave products with accessible button batteries within reach of children.

## Checking It Twice

Before discarding that gift list, make sure items purchased **DO NOT** appear on the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's recalled toys or children's products list [www.cpsc.gov/Recalls](http://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls). Throughout the year, consumers should always check their homes and toy boxes for previously recalled toys as well.

To receive recall e-mail notification, visit U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission [www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx) or call their toll free hotline (800) 638-CPSC (2772) (TTY 800-638-8270).

To report an unsafe product, visit [www.saferproducts.gov](http://www.saferproducts.gov).

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## Turkey Frying – Take Necessary Precautions



The Thanksgiving Holiday may have come and gone but Christmas is just around the corner when family and friends gather together again to celebrate all it has to offer including a home cooked meal. In the U.S., the number one cause of home fires and injuries are cooking fires. During the winter holiday season, home cooking fires increase; the peak day being Thanksgiving followed by Christmas and Christmas Eve resulting in injuries, deaths and millions of dollars in property damage.

One contributor to holiday fires is turkey frying which remains popular, this time of the year, yet poses a fire and burn hazard for consumers. Retailers anxious to capture the market during this brief and prosperous holiday season, stock their aisles and

shelves with turkey fryers. Although the industry has made great strides in the improvement of turkey fryers, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) states they still are not safe to use due to the amount of oil and high temperatures used to cook a turkey. Even well informed and careful consumers are at risk when using this product. The use of outdoor gas-fueled turkey fryers is discouraged by the NFPA unless used by properly trained professionals such as grocery stores, specialty food retailers and restaurants, who use professional quality equipment. The hazards associated with turkey fryers are:

- Hot oil can spill or splash over onto the flame igniting a fire. This can occur during the cooking process especially when placing the turkey in the fryer or when removing it.
- Fryers designed for outdoor use with or without a stand are prone to collapse causing a major hot oil spill.
- Cooking oil is combustible. If heated beyond its cooking temperature (375°), its vapors can ignite.
- Steam can result from hot cooking oil exposed to snow or rain causing a splattering of the hot oil leading to burns.
- The use of turkey fryers in close quarters poses a burn hazard/danger to children and others in the home. Oil inside a pot can stay dangerously hot for hours after use.
- **DO NOT** use in, on or under a garage, deck, breezeway, porch, barn or any structure that can catch fire.
- Frozen or partially frozen turkeys, when cooked, will cause the hot oil to splatter or produce hot steam leading to burns.

- Should a grease fire occur:
  - **NEVER** use water to extinguish it!
  - Get out and stay out! Once you're safely out of the house, call 911.

Please click on the link to view the hazards of turkey frying  
<http://www.pwcgov.org/news/pages/the-danger-with-frying-turkeys.aspx>.

### Additional Safety Tips

Chief Tim Keen of the Prince William County Fire & Rescue System would like to remind residents that the leading cause of kitchen fires is unattended cooking. Chief Keen urges the community to “Look When You Cook”! “These fires are preventable by simply being more attentive when using cooking materials and equipment.”

To keep you and your family safe during the holidays and every day, follow these simple safety tips:

#### “Look When You Cook”

- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food.
  - Turn off the stove, if you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stove, i.e. oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains.
- Should a grease fire occur:
  - **NEVER** use water to extinguish it!
  - Get out and stay out! Once you're safely out of the house, call 911.



### FRS Member Discusses Holiday & Home Heating Safety on Panorama Latino

With the upcoming holiday season and colder weather on the horizon, Lieutenant Helton Pereira spoke with Suzanne Álvarez Przygoda, host of Panorama Latino, on steps families can take to remain safe during the holidays and when choosing alternative heating methods during winter months.

He's made a list! Now he's checking it twice!  
Don't miss a morning of breakfast with Santa!



Pancakes,  
eggs,  
sausage  
or bacon

# Pancake Breakfast with Santa!

Saturday, December 14, 2019

8:00am - 11:30am

\$5.00 per person

Kids 3 & Under Free

Lake Jackson Volunteer  
Fire Department

11310 Coles Drive  
Manassas, VA 20112



*Santa & Fire Pup will arrive in the fire truck at 9:00am!*



MANASSAS, VIRGINIA  
Est. 1901

Lake Jackson Volunteer Fire Department

# **COMMUNITY SAFETY SECTION**

## **Fire Marshal's Office**

**703-792-6360**

## **Office of Emergency Management**

**703-792-5627**

## **Public Information**

**703-792-6162**

## **Public Education**

**703-792-7736**

## **Hazardous Materials**

**703-792-6360**

