

Fighting fire with prevention

Loveland Fire and Rescue is doing more than just hoping fires don't start. Its six-member fire prevention division is actively at work trying to prevent fires.

"Making sure that people are safe at home, at work, at play and when they visit here is our goal," says Tim Haag, Loveland Fire Marshal.

Haag's Fire Prevention Bureau employs a variety of programs in its effort to stop fires before they start. These include:

- public education programs
- counseling juvenile fire starters
- reviewing building plans for fire code compliance
- inspecting commercial buildings for occupancy load, life safety issues, and fire code violations
- investigation of fires
- providing free smoke detectors to needy families and individuals
- regulating hazardous materials handling and storage.

The workload is heavier than ever as the community grows, Haag says. In everything from teaching preschoolers fire safety to inspecting large commercial buildings – the Fire Prevention Bureau is committed to improving community safety.

"We're continually training and looking for new methods, technology and tools that can help us teach our children and our community how to be fire safe," Haag says.

Be jolly and safe this holiday

What's merry, bright and highly flammable? If you guessed Christmas tree, you're right on.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, Christmas trees were the items first ignited in an estimated average of 310 reported house fires per year in the U.S. between 1999 and 2002. Those fires caused deaths, injuries and \$16.2 million in property damage. Further, those statistics include both real and artificial trees.

Candles, another mainstay of holiday decorating, were the culprits in an estimated 18,000 home fires in 2002 alone. Sadly, Christmas was the peak day for home candle fires, with 10 percent of Christmas home fires started by candles.

The holiday season can be jolly and safe if you follow some basic safety tips:

- Choose holiday decorations that are flame-resistant, flame retardant or non-combustible, whenever possible.
- Keep candles away from decorations and any combustible materials. Never use candles to decorate a Christmas tree.
- Make sure that live trees are fresh and kept regularly watered. A tree stand should hold at least one gallon of water. Keep the tree at least three feet from fireplaces, space heaters, radiators, heat vents and other heat sources. Don't block an exit with your tree.
- Purchase and use lights and electrical decorations bearing the name of an independent testing lab. Follow instructions for installation and maintenance.
- Carefully inspect new and used strings of lights and replace any damaged items before plugging in.
- Don't overload extension cords.
- Connect no more than three strands of push-in lights to each other and a maximum of 50 bulbs on screw-in light strands.
- Unplug lights before replacing bulbs or fuses.
- Use care not to damage the cord's wire insulation when mounting lights.
- Turn off lights and decorations and extinguish candles when you leave the house or before going to bed.
- Keep children and pets away from light strings, electrical decorations, candles, lighters and matches.
- 'Tis the season to test smoke alarms. Make sure to let house guests know what your fire escape plan is.

Education a top fire-prevention tool

It may take a hose to put out a fire, but education can help keep fires from starting. When education efforts are successful, they can prevent a fire or reduce unwelcome consequences if a fire should occur.

Fire safety education is a Fire Prevention Bureau priority with a special focus on education for children.

The scope of the tools used in the bureau's education efforts is unusual, ranging from a house that sits on a tabletop to a firefighter who is 10 feet tall.

Sparky's Hazard House is an interactive, three-dimensional model of a home used to teach children about hazards and safety issues present in many residences. Fire Prevention Bureau staffers use the model house for presentations dealing with safety issues such as home fire hazards, electrocution hazards, poisons and hazardous materials, carbon monoxide, gun safety, cooking safety, the consequences of fire-play, and more. The presentation, offered to all Loveland third-grade classrooms, includes emphasis on installing and maintaining home smoke detectors.

The Loveland Fire Safety Trailer is a mobile teaching tool used to make fire safety education more tangible and realistic for children. The trailer includes a living room, kitchen, and bedroom, which are all used to educate children about fire hazards, cooking safety, home escape plans, and more.

Kids learn that they should know two ways out of every room, to "stay low and go" to avoid smoke and heat, and to call 911 to report emergencies. Participants then take part in a fire drill in the trailer involving smoke alarms, a heated bedroom door, and simulated smoke.

It's hard to miss Safety Sam, the newest addition to the fire department's public safety awareness program. Safety Sam is a 10 foot tall inflatable firefighter used to call attention to fire safety.

To schedule a fire safety presentation or public education event, please contact Deputy Fire Marshal Scott Pringle at 962-2614.



▲ The 10-foot-tall inflatable firefighter costume for Safety Sam cuts an impressive figure helping make fire prevention efforts more visible. The friendly figure has drawn positive response from community members.



▲ The Loveland Fire Safety Trailer takes fire safety education on the road.



▲ Using the trailer helps fire prevention staff make fire-safety education more realistic for children. Kids learn about fire hazards, cooking safety, home escape plans and more.

Learn more

For more on fire prevention and holiday safety, visit these websites:
National Fire Protection Association at www.nfpa.org
Underwriters Laboratories site at www.ul.com
Loveland Fire Prevention Bureau at www.cityofloveland.org

10-foot-tall Safety Sam raises prevention profile

Earlier this year, Loveland Fire & Rescue obtained Safety Sam, a 10-foot-tall inflatable firefighter costume for use at various programs and events. An attention grabber, Safety Sam's primary function is to generate public awareness of the fire department and its efforts to promote fire safety and education in our community.

Safety Sam has made appearances at a variety of community events including Colorado Chill basketball games, public safety awareness events at IHOP, Lowes, and Wal-mart, children's fairs, parades, and more.

Public reaction to Safety Sam has been overwhelmingly positive. Children and adults have had the opportunity to interact with him at several community events and public safety fairs. He also made an appearance at the annual Colorado Children's Day festival.

Deputy Fire Marshal Scott Pringle says he really enjoys performing in public as Safety Sam and hopes to continue developing interesting and entertaining routines for the character.

"Safety Sam has made promoting fire safety education to community members easy and a lot of fun," he says.



Smoke detector 101: install, test, clean

Smoke detectors have about a 10-year life span. They should be replaced before that time. And of course, batteries have a much shorter life. Smoke detector batteries should be replaced twice each year.

The Fire Prevention Bureau has free smoke detectors available for those who don't have them installed in their homes. For more information, call 962-2536.

Safe smoke detector tips:

- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home and inside or just outside each bedroom.
- Test them every month by pushing the test button.
- Plan and practice a home escape plan with all members of the household.
- Alert everyone in the household to the sound of the detector when it goes off. Tell them to leave the house immediately if they hear the sound.
- When smoke from cooking sets off the alarm remove the smoke, don't disable the detector.
- Vacuum around smoke detectors regularly to keep them clean.

Working smoke detectors can earn pizza

Free pizza! That's right. Free pizza.

In an effort to get working smoke detectors in every Loveland home, staff members of the Loveland Fire Prevention Bureau are teaming up with pizza delivery drivers. If they come to your home and your smoke detectors are functioning, you get free pizza.

If your smoke detectors don't work or you don't have one, Fire Prevention Bureau staff will fix, replace or install a smoke detector at no cost.

Smoke detectors are a critical element of fire safety, says Dan Englehardt, fire inspector. When they are functioning correctly they save lives.

The following pizza restaurants are participating in the program:

Blackjack Pizza 1505 N. Lincoln Ave. 669-1717	Lorenzo's Italian Deli & Pasta 285 E. 29th St., A-1 203-0240
Chicago Times 115 E. 29th St. 461-0651	Pizza Hut 237 E. 29th St. 203-1111
Domino's Pizza 1163 Eagle Dr. 669-8512	Pizza Hut 2188 W. Eisenhower Blvd. 203-9999
Domino's Pizza 1473 E. Eisenhower Blvd. 663-2880	
Pizza Street 1475 N. Boise Ave. 622-0707	

For more information about how to obtain assistance acquiring, maintaining, or installing smoke alarms, please contact the Loveland Fire Prevention Bureau at 962-2536.

New business inspection program boosts safety while it saves money

Loveland's Fire Prevention Bureau has instituted a Self-Inspection Program for some smaller, low-hazard business locations. The self-inspections enable small businesses to identify and correct fire safety issues and violations by examining their property and responding to about two dozen specific questions noted on a safety check list form.

"The Self Inspection Program allows us to provide

fire safety and code enforcement direction to businesses that we might otherwise not be able to have contact with due to our staffing limitations," said Deputy Fire Marshal Scott Pringle.

The program causes a business to take a time-out from normal day-to-day operations and focus on fire safety and code compliance. "If necessary or if requested by the business owner, we still have the op-

tion of doing an on-site inspection, but in most cases violations are identified and corrected by the business without us having to visit the location in person," Pringle said.

The program increases awareness and safety efforts by the businesses and saves time and money for the Fire Prevention Bureau.