

# FIRE & SAFETY PRESENTATION

Hillsborough Township Fire Marshall – Dave Foelsch

Wednesday, May 14, 2014

Community Clubhouse

The following information was taken from the Fire & Safety Presentation offered by the Hillsborough Township Fire Marshall, Dave Foelsch and this packet was created for every resident within the Hearthstone at Hillsborough Community & Condominium Associations.

## **ELECTRICAL HAZARDS**

- Never overload power strips
- Make sure multi-plugs are UL rated
- Do not plug multiple strips into each other
- Read strip limitations on power draw
- Do NOT attempt electrical work if you do not know how
- Replace all damaged outlets and switches
- Do NOT run electrical cords under doors, through closed windows, **under carpets**, or between mattresses
- Extension cords are for TEMPORARY use!
- Water and electricity DO NOT MIX! Change electrical components if they get wet

## **STORAGE PROBLEMS**

- Keep furnace and water heaters clear of storage
- Keep electrical panels and breaker boxes clear
- All utilities should be free and clear in case a problem arises and for proper air flow
- Residents in the condo building should NEVER have anything stored in utility closet
- If ever a problem, Firemen cannot access area while wearing equipment

## **SMOKE AND CO ALARMS \*\***

- Check your smoke detectors once a month
- Change the batteries in your detectors every time you change the clocks
- Never paint your detectors
- Replace damaged detectors

- Smoke alarms are only good for approximately 10 years (check manufacturer's listing for the life span of unit)
- CO detectors are only good for approximately 5 years (check manufacturer's listing for the life span of unit)
- These systems are often forgotten about but need to be checked

### **CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) DETECTORS**

- CO is an odorless and tasteless gas that can kill you!!!
- Change batteries when you change your clocks
- Test once a month

A good estimate of life expectancy of a combination FIRE/CO detector is five (5) years as it is their experience that these cause the most false alarms.

\*\* When the Builder of this development installed Fire/CO Detectors (specifically the condo buildings), the detectors that they installed were, in fact, within their date. That is when they purchased them. The time from when they were installed and when residents moved into their units is a different story. They can be close to expiration by the time the builder began building and when a resident actually moved in. This is why so many residents had problems with their detectors going bad, even though they appear new. This is was not the fault of the residents. You should be testing detectors once per month by pressing the button. You may use a broomstick for the units higher up. This tests the battery and horn. At this point, everyone in the community should have changed their detectors by now as the original ones have all expired.

If you do have a problem and are unsure, ALWAYS contact the Fire Department. They prefer they come out and tell you it's a false alarm rather than it being a true emergency so it is ALWAYS better to be safe than sorry.

When changing batteries, realize that it is the sensors that go bad as well.

### **CALLING 911**

- For ANY emergency call 911 (Police, Fire, Medical problems)
- Do NOT assume someone else has called
- If you see something, SAY SOMETHING

### **COOKING DANGERS**

- Cooking is the #1 cause of home fires!!!
- Never leave the room while cooking
- If the phone or doorbells rings, if you leave the kitchen, bring a spoon or pot holder to remind you that something is cooking
- NEVER put water on a grease fire. This will cause fire to immediately multiple!
- Cooking Fire: Always remove heat! Cover pot or pan with lid or damp towel

- **REMEMBER:** Baking powder = gun powder. Do not use on fire – it will explode!
- Watch clutter around stove or oven. For example: paper towels, dish towels, cooking spray cans, paper
- Pot and pan handles turned in to eliminate spill dangers
- Loose clothing: Sleeves or baggy shirts can catch fire
- Clean oven frequently: self-cleaning ovens can create fires. Call 911 if you ever see fire or smoke. Self-cleaning ovens automatically lock when over-heated.

**FIRE EXTINGUISHERS:** ALWAYS know where the extinguishers are in the common areas and clubhouse!

- Should be mounted within 10 feet of kitchen area
- It is required that all sellers must provide a fire extinguisher when re-selling their home. New construction homes are not required to offer a fire extinguisher at time of sale. It must be an “ABC Extinguisher” and not a “KITCHEN Extinguisher”.
- Be sure extinguisher is not next to the stove
- ABC Extinguisher is best for home use
- Call 911 BEFORE you use your extinguisher! If you do not, and the fire does not go out, you are only delaying the Fire Department from getting there.
- If you use your extinguisher and the fire is getting bigger... GET OUT!
- NEVER just throw the whole extinguisher into a fire as you are putting a pressurized tank into a burning fire which will cause an explosion.
- NEVER let the fire get between you and your exit
- If you don't remember how or you don't feel comfortable using an extinguisher... GET OUT!!

### **Remember PASS**

- **POINT / PULL PIN**
- **AIM** - Aim for the BOTTOM / BASE of the fire!
- **SQUEEZE** – It will make noise, do not be alarmed.
- **SWEEP** – back and forth

The life expectancy of a fire extinguisher is 5 years. You must shake the canister twice a year. So it is good practice to shake the canister when you change your clocks in the spring and fall. There is a gauge on every fire extinguisher near the neck. It will say CHARGE / OVER-CHARGE / GREEN. If it is in the Charge, it is no good. If it is in the Over-Charge, do not touch it. If it is in the Green, it is good. Residential: replace your extinguisher! Commercial: Get inspected every year and replaced and/or refilled every 5 years. For residential, when replacing your extinguisher, take the old one outside and practice with it – it will not hurt anything. This way you familiarize yourself on how an extinguisher is used. It is also better to throw an empty canister out when it is

empty as opposed to throwing a pressurized container in the garbage. Yes, it is safe to throw the empty canister in the trash.

A fire extinguisher only has about 20 SECONDS of use. They have a lot of agent and will put out a substantial fire but for only approximately 20 seconds tops. The smaller extinguishers you keep in your kitchen have only about 5-10 seconds of power to them.

Although there are fire extinguishers on each level of the condo buildings, every unit should have a fire extinguisher inside of their home.

It is not hard at all to pull the pin. Some have a safety plastic tab on them because the pins are so easy to pull out. The tabs are easy to remove as well: you just pull the tab down and it will snap off. Also, if you forget and just give the pin a good pull, the tab will automatically break off anyway.

## **KNOWING YOUR ESCAPE ROUTE**

- It's not just for kindergarteners, it's for the whole family!
- Planning your escape routes from different areas of your house can save your life!
- Example: from your living area, from your bedroom, from your kitchen, etc.
- Always have 2 ways out
- Front door / back door
- Front door / window
- If you cannot exit, defend in place
- Stay low
- Close doors, place towels in cracks to block smoke
- Get to a window – make noise – call attention to yourself

### **Condo Owners:**

If the power is out the elevator will not work. Never use the elevator in the event of a fire.

Get into the stairwell if you cannot get out.

## **MEETING PLACE**

- A location that the entire family will proceed to outside in case of emergency
- This must be a location that will always be there (sidewalk, tree, mailbox)
- Try to pick a place in front of the home / building
- PRACTICE – PRACTICE – PRACTICE
- Entire family must practice, regardless of age
- Monthly family fire drills are recommended

## **GENERAL SAFETY IN THE HOME**

### **FIREPLACE** (Although not in this community, still good to know)

- Always have doors or cages in place when having a fire
- Never store or keep ashes inside the home (ashes can hold heat for days)
- Make sure CO detectors are working
- Inspect and clean chimneys annually

### **GARAGE**

- Never run your car inside the garage. If you do, you **MUST** open the garage door!
- Extension cords are for temporary use
- Large numbers of cleaners or chemical can accelerate a fire

### **GENERATORS**

- If wired into your home, it must be done to code and with permits from the Township as well as permission from the Association
- If not installed properly, Generators can feed back into power grid, causing a danger to First Responders and Utility Workers

### **GRILLS**

- **NEVER** grill against your home or on combustible decking. A fire can spread in less than 3 minutes from one side of your home to the other.
- Grills should be 15 feet from the home (However, 5 feet is the code in Hillsborough and the Governing Documents)
- **NEVER** store propane tanks inside. A 20 lb. propane tank that is used on a standard grill can level a home if it explodes.

## **GENERAL POINTS FOR HEARTHSTONE CONDOMINIUM OWNERS**

### **Hillsborough Township Fire & Safety have FULL JURISDICTION over the condominium buildings!**

- No storage in common hallways.
- Make sure your contact numbers and information are correct. ALL contact information is stored in an envelope in all of the sprinkler rooms.
- Front door keys can be placed in Fire Department KNOX BOX outside of the building. They are the **ONLY** ones who have access to this box. Management does **NOT** have access to this building.
- If the Fireman must break into a unit in the event of an emergency, it is the unit owner's responsibility for all repairs.
- **Make sure heating vent in outside utility closet is always opened.** If they are closed off, especially during the winter months, it causes the pipes to break in the sprinkler system.

- **BY LAW: If the sprinkler systems are shut down for any reason, residents are NOT PERMITTED TO STAY IN THE BUILDING AND MUST BE EVACUATED!** If you do stay in the building they have the power to remove you.
- There is the option of hiring a Fire Watch however they are not permitted overnight and only for 2-3 hours per day. This option is NOT utilized within this Association for insurance purposes.
- Condo buildings are fully alarmed and all have sprinkler systems for fire protection
- Condo buildings have specially rated fire assembly ceilings, walls and floors.
- Common area smoke detectors are linked to the building fire alarm system which will dispatch the Fire Department.
- Condo interior smoke detectors ONLY ring inside the unit. Fire Department is NOT automatically dispatched.
- Hallways in condo buildings are fire-rated. All entranceways and stairwells are “AREAS OF REFUGE”. Get into the stairwell if you cannot get out!
- If the power is out the elevator will not work.
- Never use the elevator in the event of a fire.

### **General:**

During a typical fire call, the dispatcher can tell which fire company will be dispatched to the scene. After calling 911 it can take anywhere from 5 to 13 minutes for a team to respond. Either a Chief, Deputy Chief or Assistant Chief will arrive on the scene first to assess the scene and start the firefighting process. Typically the first hose line will attack the fire at hand while the other hose line protects all exposure buildings. There are different nozzles for each situation and the one used for the actual fire will not necessarily be the one used to protect the neighboring home.

Nancy would like an answer to a somewhat bizarre question. This did not happen however for future knowledge would like to know how to handle the problem should it ever do happen. In light of the recent storms that dropped 5” of rain on the area in one day, should she call the fire department if the large detention basin on Weston Road overflow quickly causing flash flooding through the woods, into the back of the town homes located on the other side. Unfortunately this is not a Fire Department issue and in this instance, nature would have to take its course and you would have to deal with the aftermath if and when this ever did happen. The basins and sewers will not empty until the brooks and rivers recede. Nancy just wanted to see if she could have a plan in place should this ever happen. He believes that Hillsborough DPW could respond in an emergency situation to ensure that the grates and channels are cleared out. Nancy is content knowing that there is although there is nothing anyone would be able to do, she would know this ahead of time and could be prepared.

Dave did want to remind residents that if the road is covered by water, DO NOT attempt to drive through it. The town adheres to the slogan of “Turn Around, Don’t Drown” for all water covered roadways. Vehicles and occupants that get stuck in the water put all Emergency personnel in great danger while performing rescues; even if the water isn’t that deep.

The Residents and Board of Trustees thank Dave for taking his time to inform residents of these important facts. A round of applause if given by the crowd!

## **QUESTIONS ???**

Contact Hillsborough Fire & Safety Office

(908) 369-4313 Ext. 178

[Hillsboroughfiresafety.com](http://Hillsboroughfiresafety.com)

Facebook & Twitter: Hillsborough Township Bureau of Fire Safety