

April 28, 2008

Letters to the Editor
White County News Telegraph
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To the Editor:

March 21 marked the first day of spring and the beginning of the often avoided spring cleaning ritual. As White Countians begin the difficult task of cleaning and clearing the debris that accumulated over the winter months, the White County Fire Department would like to remind citizens to think about fire safety.

On March 9th, citizens were asked to change their clock and the batteries in their smoke alarms for Daylight Saving Time but beyond checking smoke alarms, there are a number of life saving actions the public can take to save lives and protect personal property, beginning with spring fire safety cleaning.

Conduct a "family" home fire escape drill. Take advantage of the longer days during the spring season to conduct a fire escape drill either at night or early in the morning. The fire escape drill will help households to safely evacuate the home in the event of a fire. It will also help families to practice meeting at a pre-identified location or "safe area" outside of the home.

In addition to conducting a fire escape drill, the White County Fire Department suggests the following spring fire safety tips:

1. Clean your smoke alarm of any dust or foreign particles
2. Check and clean your carbon monoxide alarm
3. Check your fire extinguisher
4. Make sure electrical outlets and extension cords are not overloaded
5. Have air conditioning units and other electrical appliances checked by a licensed professional
6. Clear your basement and attics from old papers, oily rags, and broken furniture
7. Make sure all fire exits or escape routes that are identified in your fire escape drill are clear of any debris and are not blocked-off
8. Inspect your charcoal/gas grills
9. Spread mulch at least a foot away from the house with a non-combustible barrier in between, such as rock

Finally, when you are finished spring cleaning make sure all cleaning products are stored in child safety latched drawers and cabinets with the original labels.

And, as always, should your home need a smoke alarm or 9 volt battery, please contact the White County Fire Department business office at 706-865-3855 during regular business hours.



D.W. Howard
White County Fire Chief