

## No. 6: Fire Safety Inspections

### Introduction

What our job really boils down to is prevention. Even though most building and fire codes do not allow for fire departments to inspect one and two family dwellings, it still can be accomplished. Fire safety inspections can be conducted when requested by the homeowner. Additionally, fire department personnel can conduct door-to-door inspection programs to educate homeowners in fire safety.

Several fire departments have gone so far as to check for working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on every call they respond to.

This gives the firefighters an opportunity not only to conduct a fire safety inspection along with checking the smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, but it also allows them a chance to perform a size-up of the structure.

Why do a size-up? We might be in their home today for a minor incident, but next week, next month or even next year we may have to enter the home under a fire condition. One would be surprised at how much recall the mind has!

Why conduct fire safety inspection in private dwellings?

- To prevent a fire from occurring
- To identify fire hazards with the homeowner and assist them in correcting them
- Check for working smoke detectors
- Gain support for the fire department
- Share additional educational materials with the homeowner

When conducting an inspection remember - the first impression will be a lasting one. Things that we need to cover in this drill with the members will be:

- The need to act professional
- The need to dress appropriately
- Wipe our feet before going into someone's home
- Be polite and courteous
- Have the occupants accompany you during the inspection
- Only make recommendations based on your findings
- Always remember to thank them before you leave



Photo by Glen E. Ellman/FortWorthFire.com

What to look for during a fire safety inspection?

A good place to start is the kitchen and move throughout the house looking for:

- Are all the appliances in good condition?
- A clean and orderly home?
- Are any outlets overloaded and any where?
- Are extension cords being used excessively?
- Is the circuit breaker box accessible?
- Is the furnace and hot water tank in good condition with no combustible materials being stored around them? Are the flu pipe and vents in good shape and working properly?
- Are the exits (door and windows) easy to open and free of obstructions?
- Are flammable liquids being properly stored?
- Make sure there are no exposed wires anywhere

Before leaving allow the occupants time for some questions and answers. During this Q&A time firefighters can go over some fire prevention material with them and discuss some of the additional fire safety programs like "Stop, Drop and Roll", Exit Drills in the Home (EDITH), designating a meeting place outside, how to call 9-1-1 or provide them with your local emergency number.

One final key point of information that firefighters should pass along is that residents should never go back into the house, for any reason. Once you have gotten out stay out!

-Prepared by Russell Merrick/Firehouse.com