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MOFD open house features fire prevention exhibits and activities

By Nick Marnell



Photo MOFD

Fire prevention has everyone's attention, with some areas within the Moraga-Orinda Fire District lying in what Cal Fire calls a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. MOFD Fire Marshal Kathy Leonard offers advice for all Lamorinda residents, whether living in a high danger zone or not, through this year's Oct 7-13 Fire Prevention Week campaign: "Look. Listen. Learn. Be aware. Fire can happen anywhere."

Look for places fire could start. Take a good look around your home. Identify potential fire hazards and take care of them.

Listen for the sound of the smoke alarm. You could have only minutes to escape safely once the smoke alarm sounds. Go to your outside meeting place, which should be a safe distance from the home and where everyone should know to meet.

Learn two ways out of every room and make sure all doors and windows leading outside open easily and are free of clutter.

"As we head into fall, we should make sure our homes are safer from fire risk from the inside out," Leonard said. She advises the following for inside the home:

- Check and replace batteries in all smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Replace furnace filters and keep clear all combustible storage around furnaces and water heaters.
- Know and practice your fire escape plan. Have two ways out of your home and a meeting place for your family.
- Check all home extinguishers and replace if needed.
- Establish a "kid free" zone around stoves and ovens.
- Check extension cords to make sure the insulation has no cuts, wear or is hot to the touch when used. Dispose and replace all damaged extension cords. Best to plug the appliance directly into the outlet.
- Turn off any portable heaters if you leave the room or go to bed.
- Check the chimney damper to make sure it is open before having any fires in your fireplace.

Outside the home, Leonard stresses:

- Maintain your roof, gutters, decks and around the home free of dead leaves and vegetation.
- Make sure your roof is clear from overhanging tree limbs, especially near your chimney.
- Be aware of "Red Flag" warning days. These are weather conditions that increase the risk of wildfire.

"As we head into fall, it is important to remember that we must be vigilant about maintaining our vegetation to reduce wildfire spread risk. We have dry conditions and any spark can easily ignite into a fire. As the weather cools and the days grow shorter, we spend more time indoors, so we need to practice fire safety inside and out," Leonard said.

The fire marshal encourages all residents to come to the MOFD fall open house at Fire Station 41 in Moraga on Oct. 6 from 8 a.m. to noon to learn more.

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