



City of Harrisonburg
Public Information Office
409 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801
540-432-8931 (office)

For Immediate Release
September 27, 2017

Contact: Mary-Hope Vass, Public Information Officer
540.432.8931
MaryHope.Vass@HarrisonburgVA.gov

HFD Reminds Residents to Take Precautions this Fall

Harrisonburg, Va. – The Harrisonburg Fire Department (HFD) reminds residents and home owners to take proper precautions when grilling, using an outdoor fire pit, and when using fireplaces and woodstoves.

Over the weekend, members of HFD responded to a fire that was caused by a charcoal grill that was located on the deck of the home. The hot coals were not properly extinguished and were left smoldering inside the grill, which was too close to combustible materials.

In the early morning hours, the residents were alerted to the fire by their smoke alarm. The fire started on the deck and began moving toward the home. Due to the smoke alarms inside the home, the occupants were able to safely escape without injury.

Grilling Safety

- Never use charcoal or gas grills indoors.
- Keep grills at least 10 feet away from your home and other buildings.
- Never leave hot grills unattended.
- Coals should not be disposed of in plastic buckets.

With the fall season upon us and cooler temperatures on the way, it is important to keep safety in mind when starting an indoor fireplace or woodstove and when using an outdoor fire pit.

Safety Tips for Using Fireplaces and Woodstoves

- Inspect and clean woodstove pipes and chimneys annually and check monthly for damage or obstructions.
- Use a fireplace screen heavy enough to stop rolling logs and big enough to cover the entire opening of the fireplace or to catch flying sparks.
- Make sure the fire is completely out before leaving the house or going to bed.
- Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.

Small, backyard fires are permitted in the city and recreational fire guidelines can be found at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov/recreational-fire-guidelines.

Residents are also reminded to check your home to ensure all smoke alarms are working properly.

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