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Mayor Timothy Dougherty Urges Residents to Follow Fire Safety Precautions

“Thwarting a Fiery Winter Season”

Morristown, NJ (January, 2015) – After a recent fire destroyed a home, a fire suspected to have been caused by yet another space heater, Morristown Mayor Dougherty is calling on Morristown residents to take heed to fire safety measures to help prevent further accidents.

With temperatures dipping sometimes to extremes, residents often discount simple practices that can make a life-saving difference. The use of space heaters to supplement normal home heating methods or to solve a freezing issue with water pipes rises during these extreme temperature dips. If there is a need to use these devices the following safety tips should be followed:

- Use heaters on the floor. Do not place them on furniture, which could create a trip/fall hazard.
- Do not use heaters in wet or moist places such as bathrooms.
- Do not use extension cords or run the cords under carpets or rugs.
- Use only UL listed heating appliances that include tip over switches that shut the heater off if it is tipped over.
- Do not place heaters within 5 ft. of bedding, clothing, drapes etc. Do not use heaters to dry wet clothes or in an area where clothing or other objects can fall on the heater.

“Many of us don’t think much about it,” said Mayor Dougherty. “We move on with our days, our lives, believing we know what to do should a fire occur. ‘Stop, drop and roll’. We all have heard it as children and it’s certainly important. But there are things you can do to prevent even getting to that point and it’s important that they are highlighted as well.”

- Ensure that working smoke alarms are present in your home or apartment. It is recommended to have an alarm on each level as well as in outside sleeping areas and bedrooms.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month. Change batteries if necessary.
- Establish an escape plan should a fire occur and make sure everyone in your household knows exactly what to do.
- Practice that plan and be aware of your household’s escape time.

Fire is not only fast and can take two minutes to become life-threatening, but the gases released can cause disorientation and drowsiness while the heat and smoke can be more dangerous than flames. “Most home fires are preventable with more awareness and diligence,” says Mayor Dougherty. “We don’t want our residents to find out the hard way.”

Beginning in 2015 the Morristown Fire Bureau will be teaming up with the American Red Cross to help reduce fire deaths and injuries with a program that checks existing smoke detectors and installing new or replacement smoke detectors. For more information contact Chief Robert Flanagan at 973-292-6610.

For more information on space heaters and additional safety tips, please check out the following links:

New Jersey Division of Fire Safety -

<http://www.nj.gov/dca/news/news/2014/approved/20141211b.html>

National Fire Protection Association –

<http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/for-consumers/causes/heating>

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission –

<http://www.cpsc.gov/Global/Safety%20Education/Home-Appliances-Maintenance-Structure/098.pdf>