



# News Release

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**Re: National Fire Prevention Week**

(New Hanover County)— A pot holder too close to a lit burner or a space heater left on overnight could be all it takes to start a home fire. In fact, cooking and heating are among the leading causes of home fires in the United States, according to the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

That's why New Hanover County Fire Services is teaming up with NFPA from October 5-11 to urge Wilmington residents to "Prevent Home Fires" during Fire Prevention Week. This year's campaign focuses on preventing all the leading causes of home fires – cooking, heating and electrical equipment, and smoking materials. Additionally, fire safety educators will be teaching local residents how to plan and practice escape from a home in case a fire occurs.

According the latest research from NFPA, more than 2,500 people died in home fires in the United States in 2006, and 12,500 were injured. Fire departments responded to 396,000 home fires, which accounted for 80% of civilian deaths and 76% of injuries that year.

"While the number of home fires is daunting, the good news is that many are easily preventable when residents take simple steps to increase their safety from fire," said Matt Davis, New Hanover County Fire Marshal. "Whether it's smoking outside the home, keeping space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn, or staying in the kitchen when you are using the stovetop, there are easy things you can do to keep your home and family safe from fire."

Do you know how to keep your home safe from fire hazards? Reviewing the following information and taking action can help you "Prevent Home Fires" during Fire Prevention Week and year-round.

- **Cooking:** Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period time, turn off the stove.

- Heating: Keep all things that can burn, such as paper, bedding or furniture, at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Electrical: Replace cracked and damaged electrical cords; use extension cords for temporary wiring only. Consider having additional circuits or receptacles added by a qualified electrician.
- Smoking: If you smoke, smoke outside; wherever you smoke, use deep, sturdy ashtrays.

Fire Prevention Week is actively supported by fire departments across the country. For 85 years fire departments have observed Fire Prevention Week, making it the longest running public health and safety observance on record.

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