



Greetings from the Occoquan District and Happy Thanksgiving!

I hope you and your family are well and enjoying this festive season.

In this Occoquan District E-Update:

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Connie's Coats for Christmas

Please join Connie for her 3rd Annual Coat Drive to help families in Prince William County. Bring your new or used coats, blankets, and other warm items to Manassas Mall on Saturday, December 18th from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the clock in between Macy's and the Food Court. If you are unable to make your donation in person on December 18, please call Connie to make other arrangements at 202-247-2387.

Tips for a Safe Thanksgiving from OWL VFD

Thanksgiving remains the leading day for cooking fires, with three times as many cooking fires as an average day. That's according to statistics by the nonprofit *National Fire Protection Association, which also found that cooking equipment fires are still the leading cause of U.S. home fires and fire injuries, and the third leading cause of fire deaths. On Thanksgiving 2008, U.S. fire departments responded to 1,300 home cooking fires compared to 420 such fires on an average day.

"On Thanksgiving day, the kitchen is a busy place," says Jim McAllister, Chief at Occoquan-Woodbridge-Lorton Volunteer Fire Department. "Accidents and cooking fires are at an all time high during this holiday."

Unattended cooking is a leading contributing factor in cooking equipment fires. O.W.L. V.F.D. wants residents to plan ahead and be safe during the holiday, and recommends following these tips from the NFPA:

Cook with caution:

- Be on alert! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the stove or stovetop.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.

If you have a cooking fire:

- For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.
- Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
- Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number after you leave.

For more information on OWL VFD, visit www.owlvfd.org

Prevent False Alarms This Holiday Season from the PWC Police Department

Don't let your holiday season be ruined by false alarms! There are simple steps that you can take to avoid what could be costly mistakes, while at the same time creating a lovely holiday atmosphere in your home or business.

Motion Detectors and Holiday Decorations

- Always ensure that hanging or moving decorations will not activate motion detectors, especially when heating systems come on.
- If you don't know the location of your motion detectors, or the area they cover, contact your alarm company for assistance. They should be able to tell you what your motion sensors "see" and you will be better able to avoid potential false alarms.
- Once your decorations have been placed, inspect everything to make sure they do not interfere with any window or door contacts for your alarm system.
- Firmly secure outdoor lights around doors and windows so that they will not activate glass break detectors in the event of winds or storms.
- Check doors and windows for cracks or a loose fit in the frame, as inclement weather and wind gusts during the winter season could cause false alarms.
- If your doors and windows are loose, coordinate their repair with your alarm company to avoid unnecessary false alarms.

Family, Friends, Temporary Users and Holiday Travel

The holiday season provides an opportunity for family and friends to visit. Children are home from college or military service. Statistics indicate that false alarm calls increase during this time. To prevent this from occurring:

- Ensure that everyone with a key to your home or business knows how to properly operate your alarm system.
- Retrain your college students and others who have been away from home on the use of your alarm system, and remind them of the pass code and password.
- Instruct everyone with access to your home or business on the appropriate procedures for cancelling law enforcement response should a false alarm occur.
- Advise your alarm company if you will be out of town and provide them with phone numbers to contact you in the event of an alarm activation.
- If you have a house-sitter, ensure that this person knows how to operate the alarm system and cancel a dispatch, and make sure he or she has been provided with temporary passwords. Inform your alarm company of those temporary passwords and contact numbers for the house-sitters.

With everyone's help, you can make this a safe, happy, and false-alarm-free holiday season! For more information, or to register your alarm system with the Prince William County Police Department, please call the False Alarm Reduction Unit at 703-792-6687 or 703-792-7281.

Thanks for reading our November E-Update! As always, if we can ever be of service to you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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