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## 10 Safety Tips That Could Save a Life

Know the dangers of concussion in youth sports.

Getting a hard knock to the head is not something that people “play through” any more. The CDC has a wonderfully informative webpage and an online training program dedicated to preventing traumatic brain injury due to sports concussions. Check it out at [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online\\_training.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html).

When driving with babies and children in your car, it is imperative that they are properly secured in either a car seat or booster seat. The Safe Kids Kitsap facebook page has a list of free child safety seat installers.

Don't drink and drive! This should go without saying but we still have people in our state killed on almost a daily basis by drivers who are under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.

Be fire safe. Always have working smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in the kitchen and garage—two locations where fires are most likely to start. If you have a fire in your home get your family out, and go to a safe spot outside to call 911. Remember that people are much more likely to be killed by smoke inhalation than by the actual fire so it is imperative to get out of the house as soon as possible.

Don't text and drive! This is another (illegal) activity that can kill you or someone else because it just takes a moment of having your eyes averted to your cell phone to cause a deadly crash. There is no phone call or text message that can't wait until you get to where you are going to answer.

Get yourself and your family members vaccinated. As kids head back to school and people are inside more often due to the cooler weather, viruses and germs can easily spread and infect others. Many of the most common illnesses can be prevented by a simple vaccine.

When confronted by law enforcement, comply quickly. Even if you think you are in the right, not following instructions, touching an officer, or acting aggressively towards law enforcement is going to ruin your day and won't do much for the officer either. You can always file a complaint later but in order for everyone to go home safely, comply first and ask questions later.

Make sure you and your kids are visible and use appropriate safety equipment (bicycle helmet, bike reflectors) as we head into fall. Walking or biking on gray overcast days or during the early morning/late afternoon can be dangerous as drivers may have a hard time seeing you if you're clothing blends into the pavement. Wear bright colors and stay far to the side of the road to prevent disaster when walking or biking.

Know your numbers. Do you know your blood pressure, blood glucose numbers, and cholesterol counts? Diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol are the trifecta of chronic illness in the US. By knowing your numbers and taking action if you know that your numbers are high, you can prevent some of the leading causes of death in our country, namely heart disease, stroke, and diabetes-related complications.

Prepare for disaster a head of time. Don't be one of those people running to the store for car chains or food the night before a predicted 'storm of the century'. By preparing now for potential disasters, you will be ready for anything when the worst happened.



Always have a working  
Smoke Alarm



Never Text and Drive

## Debunking the Myths of Older Adult Falls

By BC Mike Wernet

Many people think falls are a normal part of aging. The truth is they're not. Most falls can be prevented and you have the power to reduce your risk. Exercising, managing your medications, having your vision checked, and making your living environment safer are all steps you can take to prevent a fall.

Every year on the first day of fall, we celebrate National Falls Prevention Awareness Day to bring attention to this growing public health issue. To promote greater awareness and understanding here are 10 common myths-and the reality-about older adult falls:

Myth 1: Falling happens to other people, "It won't happen to me".

Reality: The truth is that 1 in 3 older adults (about 12 million) fall every year in the U.S.

Myth 2: Falling is something normal that happens as you get older.

Reality: Falling is not a normal part of aging. Strength and balance exercises, managing your medications, having your vision checked and making your living environment safer are all steps you can take to prevent a fall.

Myth 3: If I limit my activity, I won't fall.

Reality: Some people believe that the best way to prevent falls is to stay at home and limit activity. Not true. Performing physical activities will actually help you stay independent, as your strength and range of motion benefit from remaining active. Social activities are also good for your overall health.

Myth 4: As long as I stay at home, I can avoid falling.

Reality: Over half of all falls take place at home. Inspect your home for fall risks. Fix simple but serious hazards such as clutter, throw rugs, and poor lighting. Make simple home modifications, such as adding grab bars in the bathroom, a second handrail on stairs, and non-slip paint on outdoor steps.

Myth 5: Muscle strength and flexibility can't be regained.

Reality: While we do lose muscle as we age, exercise can partially restore strength and flexibility. It's never too late to start an exercise program. Even if you've been a "couch potato" your whole life, becoming active now will benefit you in many ways-including protection from falls.

Myth 6: Taking medication doesn't increase my risk of falling.

Reality: Taking any medication may increase your risk of falling. Medications affect people in many different ways and can sometimes make you dizzy or sleepy. Be careful when starting a new medication. Talk to your health care provider about potential side effects or interactions of your medications.

Myth 7: I don't need to get my vision checked every year.

Reality: Vision is another key risk factor for falls. Aging is associated with some forms of vision loss that increase risk of falling and injury. People with vision problems are more than twice as likely to fall as those without visual impairment. Have your eyes checked at least once a year and update your eyeglasses. For those with low vision there are programs and assistive devices that can help. Ask your optometrist for a referral.

Myth 8: Using a walker or cane will make me more dependent.

Reality: Walking aids are very important in helping many older adults maintain or improve their mobility. However, make sure you use these devices safely. Have a physical therapist fit the walker or cane to you and instruct you in its safe use.

Myth 9: I don't need to talk to family members or my health care provider if I'm concerned about my risk of falling. I don't want to alarm them, and I want to keep my independence.

Reality: Fall prevention is a team effort. Bring it up with your doctor, family, and anyone else who is in a position to help. They want to help you maintain your mobility and reduce your risk of falling.

Myth 10: I don't need to talk to my parent, spouse, or other older adult if I'm concerned about their risk of falling. It will hurt their feelings, and it's none of my business.

Reality: Let them know about your concerns and offer support to help them maintain the highest degree of independence possible. There are many things you can do, including removing hazards in the home, finding a fall prevention program in the community, or setting up a vision exam.

## South Kitsap Firefighters “Care Enough to Wear Pink”

By: Mike Wernet



Dressed in pink turnouts, firefighters are driving pink fire trucks across the country as part of a nationwide campaign supporting women in their fight against cancer. The “Cares Enough to Wear Pink” campaigns help raise money and awareness for the fight against breast cancer. For IAFF members, losing the blue and donning the pink is a way to support women in their fight against all cancers. Because many fire fighters have been affected by cancer, it’s been an important issue for IAFF members. “Sadly, cancer has affected all of us in one way or another,” says IAFF General President Harold Schaitberger. “I hope our membership will take this resolution to heart and help raise awareness and dollars for this important cause.”



Following suit, the Washington State Council of Firefighters also took action on this important cause encouraging all of its members to participate in the “Cares Enough to Wear Pink” campaign to help raise funds and awareness for all women who are battling cancer. It is important that we as fire fighters join together and help lead the way in portraying an image of hope, strength, and courage to those women who worry about being alone in their battle for life.



Locally, South Kitsap Fire & Rescue along with a number of other departments in Kitsap County will be wearing pink shirts for this cause. The South Kitsap Firefighters Local 2876 designed and bought pink shirts for all of the departments’ staff. So don’t be surprised when the firefighters show up to your emergency dressed in pink. These shirts will be worn as the official uniform from October 24<sup>th</sup> through October 29<sup>th</sup>.

South Kitsap Fire & Rescue truly “Cares Enough to Wear Pink”.



## Fire Prevention Week is Here

By Battalion Chief Mike Wernet

National Fire Prevention Week was first declared by President Woodrow Wilson in 1920, to mark the anniversary of the 1871 Great Chicago Fire. This year's theme is "Protect your Family from Fire". This year Fire Prevention Week is October 9<sup>th</sup> through October 15<sup>th</sup>, but due to numbers we will be using the entire month to visit our 10 elementary schools, a number of pre-schools and a few private schools with our message. All and all we anticipate seeing over 6000 students.

We have two programs depending on the age group, for the younger pre-schools we provide our Touch a Truck and Firefighters are your Friend program. For the elementary students our program includes about a 45 minute assembly talking about fire safety and ways to Protect Your Family from Fire. It also includes a demonstration by the firefighters on fire ground activities and is very interactive with the students. Following the assemblies each teacher gets a packet and we challenge the elementary students to complete the worksheet we provide and return it for a chance to win a grand prize. This worksheet has a clean up or escape plan assignment along with questions about smoke alarms. We also offer free alarms and installation to those who don't have them thanks to our new partnership with Lowes.

For the past few years our Firefighters Local 2876 has bought ice cream and sponsored an ice cream party for the winning classes at each school. These parties are hosted by the firefighters on their off duty time. You may ask why the firefighters are investing their own resources in this effort. Because they know that the best way to save lives from fire is to ensure that families have the early warning provided by working smoke alarms as well as making sure their home is safe.

If you're interested in a more in-depth exploration of this topic, additional resources can be found on the web at [www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org)



Firefighters are your Friend



Lunch with the Students



Ice Cream Party





## Winter is coming, Are you ready?

Winter will be here shortly and now is the time to prepare for the ice, snow and freezing temperatures that will accompany it. Historically, the winter season results in an increased amount of property damage and injuries. In addition, many accidents occur during this season as a result of inadequately maintained properties. Our goal is to help ensure that the appropriate preventative measures are in place to protect your homes and facilities for those who use them. The following are some relatively easy preparatory and maintenance measures you can take to prepare your property for the impending weather conditions. These steps will help you minimize possible damage and prevent any unnecessary incidents from occurring.

### Roofs

The roofs of your buildings need to be inspected before severe winter weather arrives. In particular, you should do the following:

- Ensure drains are cleared of obstructions and operating correctly.
- Make certain gutters and down spouts are functioning properly and are cleared of any debris and leaves. Wet leaves can add considerable weight when frozen, which may increase the possibility of damage.
- In general, check the roof for any previously unidentified damages.

### Plumbing

While frozen pipes themselves are not a major concern, the problems begin once the water thaws. Taking the following actions will help alleviate any damages:

- Ensure your buildings' water or drain piping is protected from freezing by insulating any exposed piping.
- Make certain unoccupied spaces have adequate heating to keep any pipes from freezing.
- Check that crawl spaces, roof hatches, and attic accesses are all closed and insulated properly.

### Snow and Ice removal

When snow and ice impact your entity, it is important to protect those utilizing your facilities from slip and falls. Develop a plan to complete the following actions:

- Clear snow and ice from all walkways and then regularly monitor walkways once they have been cleared.
- Remove any ice overhangs from buildings. Falling ice can be a hazard to pedestrians.
- Remove snow from parking lots.
- Clear snow and ice from your roofs as needed. The excess weight of snow can damage roofs, gutters and down spouts. Additionally, wind-blown snow can create problems with HVAC systems.





## Help Firefighters “Give Burns the Boot”

By: Lt. Jeff Faucett

October marks the anniversary of the 1871 Great Chicago Fire and with this anniversary come many events in the fire service. We celebrate Fire Prevention Week with the schools, a number of departments hold community fundraisers and we are involved with the Northwest Burn Foundations “Give Burns the Boot” campaign.

South Kitsap Fire & Rescue is proud to announce we have been a partner with the Northwest Burn Foundation since 1991, therefore this marks our 20 year anniversary. During this partnership our community has donated over \$91,000. Our goal this year is to surpass the \$100,000 mark.

Your gift helps the Northwest Burn Foundation, a non-profit organization, prevent burns and improve the quality of life for burn survivors through programs, education and research.

The NWBF provides scald prevention education to families with young children. For a free scald kit you can call 1.888.NO.BURNS.

They also provide a number of services for burn survivors and their families including:

- Summer Camp for Children and Teens
- Emergency Housing for those with Loved Ones be Treated at Harborview Burn Center
- Support groups
- Special Events and Outings
- Mentoring Programs
- Corrective Cosmetic Consultation
- Direct Aid

This year on October 15<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 -2:00 South Kitsap Firefighters will be at Fred Meyer, Mile Hill Albertsons and Sedgwick Albertsons with their boots out collecting your donations for this great cause. Along with the boot drive we will be offering tours of our fire engines and ambulances with gifts and prizes for the kids.

Also on October 15<sup>th</sup> the South Kitsap Volunteer Association will be holding their Annual Fire House Spaghetti Feed at the Fire Station. This will take place at our Headquarters Station, located at 1974 Fircrest Dr SE from 5-8pm. All proceeds go to local charities.

Thank you for supporting our efforts, we look forward to seeing you at one or both of our events.



## Volunteer News

Here is this quarter's question to Volunteer Lieutenant Terry Lerma.  
"Why do I volunteer with South Kitsap Fire and Rescue? "

It's an opportunity to do what I did when I was active duty...to teach, mentor, train, and coach young men and women who will some day either be my replacement, the person who saves me, or the person who some day I can look at with pride and say, "Yes, I served with him/her when we were volunteers together..." I'm at a point in my fire service career where I can teach what I know, give the benefit of the mistakes I made, and continuously strive to help others be either the best volunteer they can be, or help prepare them to become a career firefighter. Volunteering also allows me keep my EMT certification which I use as a member of the K9 Search and Rescue Team with Kitsap County ESAR.



As for upcoming events:

The Fire House Spaghetti Feed will be held on Saturday, Oct 15th, at our Headquarters fire station, located at 1974 Fircrest Dr, SE. from 4:00 to 8:00 pm. Local businesses who donate to the event are; Farmer George's meat, Morningside Bakery French bread, and Supreme Bean coffee. Proceeds from the event benefit local youth sports.



Breakfast with Santa will also be at station 8 on Saturday,

The schedule for the popular Santa Runs, where Santa rides the fire engine to reach children in the Port Orchard area, is not yet finalized. As people can imagine, Santa has a pretty busy schedule. When the dates and places are determined, they will be posted on the volunteer web site; [www.skfrva.org](http://www.skfrva.org). Happy Holidays!



## Upcoming Events

### Public CPR and First Aid (\$20 per Student)

All classes are taught at our HQ station at 1974 Fircrest Dr.

Students must pay in advance to be registered (18 maximum)

For a full list of classes go to: [www.skfr.org](http://www.skfr.org)

#### Adult First Aid and CPR

October 5, 2011

November 2, 2011

December 7, 2011

#### Pediatric CPR Only

October 19, 2011

### Fire House Spaghetti Feed

October 15, 4-8pm

HQ Fire Station, 1974 Fircrest Dr SE  
Hosted by the South Kitsap Volunteer Firefighters Association

For more info go to:

[www.skfrva.org](http://www.skfrva.org)

### Help Firefighters "Give Burns the Boot"

October 15<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 - 2:00

Local Grocery Stores

Stop by, donate, see the equipment and get free stuff for the kids

### Relay For Life

This year's event has come and gone but throughout the year our Firewalkers Relay Team offers First Aid and CPR Classes for groups, with all the proceeds going to the relay. For more information you can contact Terri at 895-6522.

### Car Seat Inspections

South Kitsap Fire & Rescue offers free car seat inspections and installation tips the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month. This is done at our Headquarters Station located at 1974 Fircrest Dr SE. For an appointment call 871-2411.

### Breakfast with Santa

December 3rd, from 8:00 am to noon.

HQ Fire Station, 1974 Fircrest Dr SE  
Hosted by the South Kitsap Volunteer Firefighters Association

For more info go to:

[www.skfrva.org](http://www.skfrva.org)

New Firefighters Justin Downey, Nic Fenton and April Ramirez are sworn in by Chief Wayne Senter.



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