

NEWS RELEASE



Southern Platte Fire Protection District
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Fire District Urges SAFE Usage of Portable Heaters in Homes

Parkville, MO (January 5, 2015) – According to a study, released by the U.S. Fire Administration, 900 portable heater fires occurred on average each year from 2008-2010. The death total, according to NFPA in 2011 alone was 400 deaths. USFA reported that 150 injuries occurred with approximately \$53 million in property loss.

Fire Marshal Dean Cull explains that “portable heater fires” are considered to be any fire that is caused by catalytic heaters, oil-filled heaters or heaters that are designed to be moved or carried for use in different locations of a structure. “Space heaters fall into this category and many of residents need to follow the manufacturers’ recommended usage guidelines when using these type devices,” states Cull.

As the cooler months have started and more residents will be preparing for the winter/cold, the Fire District urges everyone to be cautious when using any form of a portable heater.

Even though the amount of heater fires only represents 2% of all heating fires, the death total was significant; accounting for 45% of all fatal heating fires. Fire Marshal Cull explained that in many of these cases these fires were preventable. On multiple occasions, a heater was placed too close to combustible items or residents left the heater unattended.

The Fire District’s boundaries include a majority of single and multi-family residences. During this study, it was determined that 89%, of the fires each year, were in one- and two-family residences. “Portable heater fires have already occurred this winter season in Southern Platte County and there is a high probability for others to occur during these upcoming cold months, unless residents follow the manufacturers’ recommended usage and use them safely,” said Cull.

The Southern Platte Fire Protection District's four stations provide fire suppression, inspections, emergency medical assistance, hazardous-materials response, and public education for more than 37,000 citizens in Platte County, MO. The Southern Platte Fire Protection District, which includes Parkville, Weatherby Lake, and Farley, is in one of the fastest-growing areas in the Kansas City metropolitan area. In addition to serving its own District, the department provides automatic-aid assistance to the Kansas City Fire Department and Riverside Public Safety.

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