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# Introducing Our New First Responders Section: Honoring Heroes and Their Families

In a world where uncertainty often prevails, there are those who stand strong, ready to respond at a moment's notice. These individuals are the heartbeat of our community, the ones who rush toward danger when others might instinctively flee. They are our local first responders – the embodiment of courage, dedication, and selflessness.

We are thrilled to introduce our new First Responders section, a heartfelt tribute to the remarkable individuals who put their lives on the line every day to ensure our safety. Through this section, we aim to illuminate the often-unseen sacrifices they and their families make, providing a glimpse into the challenges and triumphs that define their unique journey.

Our First Responders section is more than just a collection of stories; it's a celebration of resilience and commitment. We'll be featuring local first responders from several of the communities our newspapers serve in west Michigan – the police officers, firefighters, paramedics, and emergency medical technicians who serve as the backbone of our communities. By sharing their experiences, we hope to bridge the gap between their heroic endeavors and the lives they lead beyond the call of duty.

Through candid interviews and heartwarming narratives, we'll explore the daily life of a first responder, their motivations, the hurdles they face, and the moments of pride that keep them going. We'll also turn the spotlight to their families, acknowledg-

ing the unwavering support that stands behind these courageous individuals. From late-night emergency calls to missed family gatherings, we aim to shed light on the challenges they embrace with unwavering resolve.

We know this is a small sampling of the many men and women who put on the uniform. They're representative of so many more who sacrifice in their own way to protect all of us every single day.

None of this would have been possible without the support of our local business community that recognizes the significance of honoring our first responders. We extend our deepest gratitude to the businesses that stepped up to make this section a reality and we encourage our readers to do

the same. Their commitment to spotlighting these everyday heroes is a testament to the strong bond that ties our communities together.

As we embark on this new journey of appreciation and recognition, we invite you, our readers, to join us in celebrating the true heroes among us. Through these stories of sacrifice and dedication, we hope to inspire a renewed sense of unity and gratitude. Let's come together to honor the first responders who exemplify the very best of humanity.

— Mike Hrycko  
Publisher  
Shoreline Media



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# Blue Lake Township firefighter honored to serve his community

BY MADISON LAJEWSKI  
BEACON STAFF WRITER

Native to Ravenna, Nicholas Phillippo moved to Blue Lake Township to begin his career in fire seven years ago. His interest in fire safety began after learning about it from a close friend.

"One of my good friends, Richard Whelpley is in the fire department as well," Phillippo said. "I was hanging out with him one day when he got called out and it just started from there."

In 2022, Phillippo's hard work and commitment to serving the community was honored by receiving the award for firefighter of the year.

"My favorite thing about my job is helping people and making a difference in everyone's lives," said Phillippo.

One of the many activities Phillippo

enjoys organizing and helping with are youth events.

"As a fire department, we do multiple community things for the scout camps around us," Phillippo said. "When all the scouts are in sessions, we do a lot of events with them and show them the trucks. I also set up a thing at Oak Knoll Family Campground where the kids who are camping get to check out the trucks and stuff like that. We're trying to get kids interested in joining in the future and helping them understand a better way to protect themselves in case an emergency arises."

In addition to achieving firefighter of the year, he also was the top responder in 2022 by the number of calls he went on.

"He's a top responder with our de-

partment," Blue Lake Township Deputy Fire Chief Joseph Knop said. "He's been quite active in our training program, as well as our duty shift program. That's when we do our truck checks that get done once a month, there are six or seven trucks.

"He's recently taken out of service fire hoses and made them for kids to use during our firefighter challenge. He's helped develop the firefighter challenge for kids to get them excited about some

of the things that we do."

Phillippo takes pride in his community and the work he does to protect it.

"I moved here from Ravenna," said Phillippo. "It's home to me. I'd like to serve my community, and protect the people and the community around us."



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# Police Sgt. Schmeling: 'Show them that you care'

BY DAVID L. BARBER  
SPECIAL TO THE DAILY NEWS

MANISTEE — In the not too distant future, Sgt. Steven Schmeling will walk into the sunset — the same hometown sunset that's teased him all his life.

After nearly 30 years of wearing the badge of the Manistee Police Department, the 52-year-old hometown boy will retire.

"Life is good and I'm ready to retire — probably after the first of the year," said the 1989 graduate of Manistee High School. "I'll miss a lot of it. I'll miss the camaraderie that we have. I'll miss seeing people out in the community. I grew up here and I never left."

Sitting at a picnic table at the Fifth Avenue Beach — a place where he finds solace and silence — the soft-talking, always-smiling law enforcement officer reflected on his career and what it means to be a first responder.

"Being a first responder can take it out of you," he said, all but whispering. "We see horrible things — things that we don't let anybody else to see, ever, and it takes a toll on us. After years of not just dealing with criminals, but with the other aspects of the job such as saving lives — or seeing lives being taken, or not being able to help a child — all those things take a toll on you and they'll catch up with you."

"That's why it's important that we have a good core of people who we can sit down and talk with. A lot of departments now days will provide their employees with people they can seek out — counselors, and that's really important, too."

Over the years Schmeling has diligently built a resume of leadership and organizational skills that have served him

— and the community he serves — well. Included in that career-long training process was attending Staff and Command Executive Leadership Training at Northwestern University in 2002; earning a bachelor's degree in management organization development at Spring Arbor University in 2006; completing the prestigious National Executive Leadership Training at the FBI National Academy in Virginia in 2007; earning his master's degree in organizational management at Spring Arbor University in 2008; undergoing extensive firefighting and Hazmat training with the Fire Fighters Training Council in Big Rapids in 2010 and 2013; becoming a licensed Emergency Medical Technician in 2016; and more.

Police work, he will tell you, and becoming a dependable first responder, is a matter of continued education.

"The FBI National Academy brings a lot of executive leadership people together," he said. "It's about making good contacts and as a result, we stay in contact a lot. Leadership is important, that's why I went back to school, to get my bachelor's degree and master's degree in organizational management. I think that's important to utilize your experience, your training and your education in those leadership fields so you can provide (your team) with what they need, and then trust that they are then going to do their job and do it well."

"Leadership, especially in a small community, can make you or break you. Fortunately things are going well for us and we get good community support — that's big for us. I think the majority of people in Manistee really support us and we take pride in that."

Schmeling also talked about the generational continuity he's grown up with in his hometown, something he says makes Manistee the close-knit community it has been over the years.

"When I first started I was 22 and I knew everyone who was about my same age," he said. "I dealt with them, I dealt with their kids and as I continued my career, I started to deal with their kids' kids. The good thing is that when I go and deal with those people, they know me and they know I've grown up with them. I've made good friendships with them and they respect that. That's really important if you can work in your own hometown — it has some advantages and some disadvantages."

Schmeling said while law enforcement has changed considerably over the years, he still would encourage others to consider becoming such a public servant.

"For the people who are just starting in law enforcement, this can be a rough job — this isn't an easy path to follow," he said. "(But the truth is) the younger people who are coming in aren't necessarily looking at this as a career like when we started ... when we'd go some place, we knew that we were going to stay there. This, at one time, was a really fun job and it was very well respected — people respected authority — but now it's turned around. And though it's not all bad, the respect for authority is really not there and it's just the way things have changed in the world — it's a sad situation. It's a hard job to get into nowadays."

"When I first started I think there were like 75 or 80 people who applied, now we're lucky if we get just a couple of applicants. It's just not a profession that ev-

eryone wants to go into and that's sad because we have a good community here."

And if the job of being a police officer has changed significantly over the years, there is one part of that Schmeling still enjoys — meeting people.

"I enjoy talking with people," he said. "Being one of the senior people here, I feel like I want to make sure everybody goes home safe and I want to make sure everyone is mentally and physically fit for their job, because sometimes when you see things like car accidents and deaths it can take a toll on you."

"I like to spend time with people and talk with them if they're having a bad day. I'll take as much time, as possible, to talk with somebody."

In looking forward to walking off into the sunset, Schmeling reflects on all those sunsets and sunrises — and all those hours in between — he saw in the past.

"My favorite time was the summer I spent on foot patrol and I'd be down at the beaches (to talk with the people)," he said. "I got out to talk to people in the stores and seeing people walking downtown and on the riverwalk was amazing."

"That's what I like to do and that's what I think is important in a small town is to get involved with your community, which I encourage our younger officers to do — get into a service club, or get into the schools and go watch sporting events."

"Be seen, show them that you care," he said. "You'll be amazed that once you start getting involved with different organizations, how much fun it is to be doing something good for your community."





COURTESY PHOTO

Manistee Police Dept. Sgt. Steve Schmeling with 4-year-old granddaughter Stella Newman.



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# Goble inspired by death of siblings to serve

BY KENDRA GILCHRIST  
DAILY NEWS INTERN

Fountain Area Fire Chief Jeremy Goble has been firefighting for 27 years.

Ever since his two brothers died in a Mason County house fire in 1977, Goble knew he wanted to serve the community as a firefighter to help prevent losses like what he suffered.

"That was one of my motivational pushes to try and help out where I could so other families didn't have to go through similar," said Goble, who has an extensive background in emergency services.

Goble is a licensed EMT and has a degree in law en-

forcement, along with being a fire chief. Working as a first responder is a demanding commitment that takes its toll on many aspects of their lives. Goble explained that he dedicates a lot of time and energy to be there when the community needs him.

"You get called out at any hour," Goble said. "(I) could be sitting there having dinner, could be having a birthday party, and a call goes out and you go."

Goble has two sons, Ty, who is 15, and Bruce, who is 11, whom he sometimes misses out on having family time with because of his job. His sons are understanding of Goble's line of work, even

through the unique hardships it poses.

"When they were younger, they'd come down to the fire house a lot and, you know, clean trucks with me and they'd come running out anytime a page went off," Goble reminisced, "They were really excited when they were younger, as they got older that excitement faded."

Firefighters for the Fountain Area Fire Department are paid on call, which means most have to maintain other jobs. Goble noted this as a struggle for most people, since finding full-time employment that will let them leave whenever a call goes out is difficult. It

also means the majority of time they spend firefighting is in addition to their other work and time spent away from their families.

"It's very demanding," said Goble, "and it's rewarding at the same time."

Goble also juggles the extra responsibilities of being fire chief, such as attending six to eight meetings a month. He is an instructor for the Rescue Task Force in Mason County as well. But despite all of the difficulties that come with being a first responder and the many years he has already dedicated to it, Goble doesn't plan to stop any time soon.

"When the page goes off, you get that rush of want-

ing to go and help," he explained, "That just doesn't seem to die off."

The desire to help others in his community is a strong force in Goble's life and it keeps him responding to call after call. Support from his family and

the community have kept him strong in this endeavor, and it's made all of his hard work worthwhile.

"Helping somebody and making their worst day a little bit better, that's really what drives you," he said.

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# Boyer fulfills dream fighting fires for White Lake

BY ANDY ROBERTS  
BEACON EDITOR

It takes a certain type of person to sign up for the life of a first responder - someone who truly never really knows what a typical work day might be like.

For Dan Boyer, a nearly 20-year veteran of the White Lake Fire Authority, it helps that he's invested in the area. A lifelong resident, he graduated from Whitehall High School and never wanted to leave.

That gives him something in common with his chief, Pete McCarthy, who was eight years behind him in school but entered the authority just a few months before Boyer did. The two even went through the fire



Dan Boyer, shown here at the beginning of his run with the White Lake Fire Authority, is nearly 20 years in and is showing no signs of slowing down.

training academy together.

Boyer didn't join the WLFA right away, despite the fact that growing up he'd always wanted to do so; he applied right out of high school, but it seemed at the time that there were plenty of people on staff already.

From there, Boyer moved on with his life and didn't think much of it until several years later, when he ran into McCarthy at the latter's at-the-time day job, the Wesco at the corner of Whitehall and Benston roads. McCarthy had just signed up for the WLFA in August, and told Boyer the WLFA was looking for people. Boyer even remembers

the exact date — Jan. 3, 2003 — although he conceded the fact that it was his birthday helped it stick in his mind. He filed paperwork with the WLFA the same day.

McCarthy remembers the first call he went on with Boyer, a classic car junkie. There were three unusual things about the call, which took place only a few months after Boyer applied: First, the duo was excused from class at the academy to respond to it; second, it so happened to be a fire at that same Wesco; and third, they traveled to the call in Boyer's classic Ford pickup.

"It sounded like a big call when we were in class," Boyer said. "It was the real deal, and it was what we were going to do as long as we wanted. Getting that call during a fire class, and utilizing what little we had learned at that point, (was special)."

Boyer's responsiveness has never slowed down from that day. McCarthy said Boyer, who works third shift at the authority, has responded to nearly 3,000 calls since August 2007, which is as far back as the authority's records go, and is always in the top five in responses among the WLFA. In 2022, McCarthy said, Boyer responded to an average of over one call every day.

Boyer said he enjoys being someone people can count on, and in fact it was a main draw for him wanting to become a firefighter in the first place.

"Being reliable for our full-timers and command staff, that's just the type of person I am," Boyer said. "They get to rely on you, and I don't want to stop responding all the time...More hands make light work, and I enjoy it. I enjoy helping people and helping the community."

McCarthy, for one, appreciates being able to count on Boyer. He said Boyer is among the most reliable firefighters he has ever worked with in his 20-plus years.

"He's found an absolutely awesome niche in the WLFA," McCarthy said. "He participates in community events out in the public. He's a senior firefighter, takes on a leadership role; he teaches new firefighters; he goes into trucks with them and mentors them. Top to bottom, he's exactly what you'd want out of a community responder."

Boyer's being such a community staple, McCarthy said, makes him an even better first responder, because he knows virtually every-



White Lake Fire Authority firefighter Dan Boyer with his wife and daughter during a recent community parade.



## Honoring & Celebrating Our Local First Responders

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one. Due to his pre-existing relationships, he can provide a calming presence to someone even if they're going through a horrible moment like their home catching on fire.

"He has a great bedside manner and can talk to people even on their worst day," McCarthy said. "He's a hometown hero, and there's a calming effect in that. People can have the worst day of their life, but if they see a familiar face, it can calm that situation a little bit."

"Between Pete and I, we know a lot of people in town, and you see a relief on their face when a familiar face walks in," Boyer said. "It helps calm them down quite a bit almost immediately."

It's not always calm, though. Boyer has been on his share of memorable calls, and unfortunately, for him the one that sticks out most is a fatal fire that took place in 2005, in which one person died and a house and a Bell's Furniture warehouse next door were destroyed. Boyer remembered seeing many people watching the blaze and neighboring fire departments having to get involved to help extinguish the fire.

Another call he vividly recalls was the destruction of the historic Michillinda Lodge in December 2012.

"That was way early in the morning, 2 or 3 in the morning," Boyer said. "We were inside, and that was the first time they sounded the evacuation horns to get out because it was getting out of control. Standing there watching history burn down will always stick with me."

Likely in part because he knows how it feels to be on site for those horrible moments, Boyer will often check in on his fellow firefighters if he knows or gets word that they were on a similarly difficult call, McCarthy said.

"Even if he's at work and doesn't go on a call, he'll hear about some of the bad calls, calls involving a child, or a violent call, or something like that," McCarthy said. "Any time there's a call that might negatively im-



**White Lake Fire Authority firefighter Dan Boyer has been a fixture in the area for decades and is about to celebrate 20 years with the WLFA.**

pact someone's mental health, he's the first guy they get a text from. I still get a text from him after those calls to this day. He just genuinely cares about everyone around him. He just elevates the level of service the WLFA has to offer this community.

"He's really just a salt of the earth guy."

Despite the possibility of terrible events like those, Boyer said he sticks with the WLFA because he keeps wanting to help. He chuckled that he has decided at various points what longevity benchmark would lead to his retirement, and he's not yet complied.

Someday Boyer's days at the WLFA will be done, but just as signing up for this life takes a certain kind of person, that same kind of person finds it really difficult to leave.

"I said 15 years would be it, and I said 20 years would be it," Boyer said; his 20-year anniversary at WLFA will be in January. "As long as I can, physically and mentally, I'm going to do the job. It's a good group of guys, and we've got a good chief."



**The Michillinda Lodge fire in 2012 is one of the most memorable ones White Lake Fire Authority's Dan Boyer has been involved with.**

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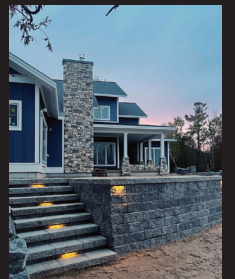
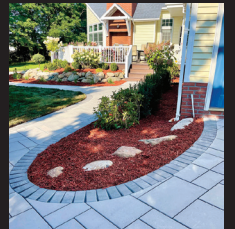


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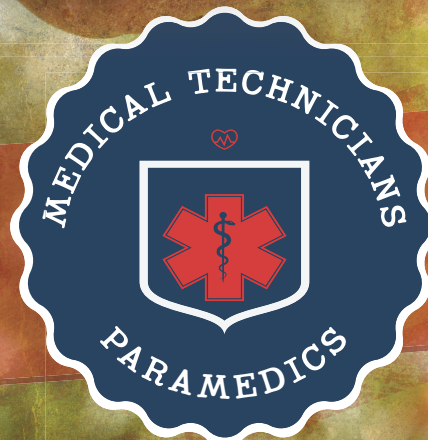
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# Emergency service part of the Ginn/Yost pedigree

BY JOHN CAVANAGH  
HERALD-JOURNAL WRITER

If family is everything, it would be something the Ginn/Yost family of Oceana's Grant Township knows very well.

Over the years, a number of Ginn family members have served either on the Grant Township Fire Department or the Grant Township Rescue Squad. Current fire department Chief Dan Yost became part of the family when he married Ginn daughter, Kelly, who serves with the rescue squad.

A department member for the last 43 years, Jim Ginn remembers the early days.

"I think I had more money back then," Jim said, explaining how he was paid \$1.50 per hour to work at a filling station during the summer months, but his wages were reduced to a \$1 per hour during the winter.

Soon after, he was approached by late Chief Roland Brooks about becoming a fire department member.

"Roland just said we need more guys so I signed up," Jim said.

Brooks and Rex Converse played a role in getting Jim's wife, Betty, and others in another service provided by



Betty and Jim Ginn (left) along with son-in-law Dan Yost and daughter Kelly at the Grant Township Fire Department

the fire department with that being the township rescue squad. They went through the training and the squad was formed. She continued to work with the rescue unit until approximately 2010. Betty also worked for the county's ambulance

service in Shelby.

In the event both her parents were called out in the evening or at night, Kelly would go in her pajamas to the Brooks residence which was just across the street. She also recalled her parents missing dinners among

other things.

"It takes a lot of dedication in that job," Betty said.

Keeping it in the family, Kelly's older brothers, Jim, Jeff also served on the fire department.

So did her dad's brothers, John and Jerry Ginn. At one

point her grandfather, Jim, was the fire chief. Kelly's niece Lindsey Lasater is also a member.

"You almost grew up knowing it," Kelly said. "It's in the blood."

Dan met Kelly when she worked with the ambulance

service and she was asked to get Dan to join.

"Fast forward 15 years and here we are," Dan said.

Initially Dan had no interest in emergency service. He was approached by a then coworker who was scheduled to take the training if he would take it, too. Once he did, he thought it was cool.


"To be honest, I had no interest in EMS," he said.

Since he became chief following Brooks death in December 2020, Yost said the department has experienced lots of collaboration. The department also has purchased a new truck, and there's been an increasing number of people join the department. He pointed out, however, that it's same core group which usually shows up to calls.

"We're just trying to adapt to the new rules of firefighting," Yost said.

Kelly said the changes also have created a family atmosphere within the department, which in many cases it is.


Jim plans to continue with the department "as long as he can walk," Dan said of his father-in-law and assistant chief. "I think every department wishes they had a Jim Ginn," Yost said.



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Matt Bryant is currently serving as a corrections deputy with the Mason County Sheriff's Office. He has been in that positions for four year. He has also served on the Hamlin Fire Department for the past 27 years.

JEFF KIESSEL | DAILY NEWS

## Deputy Bryant relies on his training to serve community

BY JEFF KIESSEL  
ASST. MANAGING EDITOR

Matt Bryant has always given back to this community, not only is he a volunteer firefighter in the Hamlin Fire Department but he works full time at the Mason County Jail as a corrections deputy.

Bryant said that about four years ago he — as a Hamlin firefighter — was responding to a 911 call of a possible drowning. The Mason County Sheriff's Office was also responding at the time, AND both departments were working together on the scene.

Bryant — who has been with the fire department for 27 years — was running operations for incidences on scene for the fire department that day. Bryant said later he

received a call for the Mason County Sheriff's Office to see if he would be interested in becoming a corrections deputy.

Bryant talked with the sheriff's office, took a tour of the jail and later he went through the application process, and he was hired in part time in 2019.

"I worked for about six months and went through another application process and got hired full time in March of 2020," he said.

Bryant said the jail is an interesting job.

"You just never know what you are going to get into," he said. "Sometimes there are basic charges and basic inmates and sometimes you have other ones that are a little more difficult to work with."

He said the support from the community

has been great.

"The support in Mason County is just amazing," he said. "I would not want to be anywhere else."

Bryant — who has a daughter in high school — said sometimes it can be challenging to separate work life and family life.

"Everybody has a job and you have to work," he said. "You have your days off that are scheduled, and we do get vacation."

Bryant — whose daughter plays high school sports — said sometimes it is tough, there are some games that you just can't make.

"You can't make everything, but you make what you can," he said. "We work it out, and it helps that she is a little older and can drive herself to practice."

He said his daughter understands that he has to work.

"Even with the fire department you never know when a call is going to come in," he said. "She knows that when it does, a call comes in, dad has to go. My family has grown used to that."

Bryant said when a fire call comes in, even after 27 years, it is an opportunity to get to use your training.

"For myself, after 27 years, I do not want to see anybody lose anything to lose loved ones, but yet you still want to be able to use your training because you are trained to make a difference. And you want to make that difference so you are going to make every effort to make that difference."





## How to pursue a career as an EMS pro

Emergency medical personnel are often first on the scene when someone experiences an accident or a medical emergency. EMS workers are generally trained and certified as certified first responders, emergency medical technicians and paramedics. However, the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians recognizes five different levels of emergency medical service worker. Though similar, the requirements governing each type of EMS worker vary.

All EMS workers provide life-saving services and help transport individuals to hospitals for additional treatment and care. Here is a deep look into the different EMS personnel and the training one might expect.

### CERTIFIED FIRST RESPONDER

A certified first responder is an integral member of an EMS team. These individuals provide basic medical care at the scene of emergencies, including basic first aid, stabilization of injuries, treating shock, and other tasks. First responders must be certified by the National Registry of Emergency Technicians, according to Learn.org. The American Red Cross offers first responder training courses. Certification requirements vary by state, and each state's EMS office can provide specific details.

### EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN

According to the UCLA Center for Prehospital Care, EMTs complete a course that is a

minimum of 170 hours. One does not need to have previous medical experience to become an EMT, but eligibility requirements may vary from school to school and state to state. For example, to be EMT eligible in California, a person must be 18 years of age. In Pennsylvania, one must be 16 years of age and the training course is 240 hours and includes both classroom and practical lab scenarios. Like certified first responders, EMTs must pass the NREMT examination in order to obtain certification. EMTs can be EMT-B (basic) or one of two EMT-I (intermediate).

### PARAMEDIC

Paramedic students complete many more hours of training that may last between six and 12 months. Coursework builds on EMT education and blends additional medical training, including courses in anatomy, cardiology, medication, and physiology. Paramedics will take part in lectures, skills labs and a hospital internship, followed by an EMS field internship before passing the national certification exam. Upon passing, these individuals will receive the highest certification of pre-hospital care in the United States.

EMS workers provide life-saving medical care and are often first on a scene when a medical emergency takes place. Working as part of an EMS team is a demanding but rewarding career.



## How to make homes safer from fires

Over a five-year period beginning in 2015 and 2019, fire departments across the United States responded to roughly 347,000 home structure fires per year. That data, courtesy of the National Fire Protection Association, underscores the significance of home fire protection measures.

Smoke detectors are a key component of fire protection, but there's much more homeowners can do to protect themselves, their families, their belongings, and their homes from structure fires.

- Routinely inspect smoke detectors. Smoke detectors can only alert residents to a fire if they're working properly. Battery-powered smoke detectors won't work if the batteries die. Routine smoke detector check-ups can ensure the batteries still have juice and that the devices themselves are still functioning properly. Test alarms to make sure the devices are functioning and audible in nearby rooms. Install additional detectors as necessary so alarms and warnings can be heard in every room of the house.

- Hire an electrician to audit your home. Electricians can inspect a home and identify any issues that could make the home more vulnerable to fires. Ask electricians to look over every part of the house, including attics and crawl spaces. Oft-overlooked areas like attics and crawl spaces pose a potentially significant fire safety threat, as data from the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) indicates that 13 percent of electrical fires begin in such spaces.

- Audit the laundry room. The laundry room is another potential source of home structure fires. NFPA data indicates

around 3 percent of home structure fires begin in laundry rooms each year. Strategies to reduce the risk of laundry room fires include leaving room for laundry to tumble in washers and dryers; routinely cleaning lint screens to avoid the build-up of dust, fiber and lint, which the NFPA notes are often the first items to ignite in fires linked to dryers; and ensuring the outlets washing machines and dryers are plugged into can handle the voltage such appliances require. It's also a good idea to clean dryer exhaust vents and ducts every year.

- Look outward as well. Though the majority of home fires begin inside, the NFPA reports that 4 percent of such fires begin outside the home. Homeowners can reduce the risk of such fires by ensuring all items that utilize fire, including grills and firepits, are always used at least 10 feet away from the home. Never operate a grill beneath eaves, and do not use grills on decks. Never leave children unattended around firepits, as all it takes is a single mistake and a moment for a fire to become unwieldy.

- Sweat the small stuff. Hair dryers, hair straighteners, scented candles, clothes irons, and holiday decorations are some additional home fire safety hazards. Never leave candles burning in empty rooms and make sure beauty and grooming items like dryers, straighteners and irons are unplugged and placed in a safe place to cool down when not in use.

Fire departments respond to hundreds of thousands of home fires each year. Some simple strategies and preventive measures can greatly reduce the risk that a fire will overtake your home.





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PHOTO CREDIT: LUDINGTON DAILY NEWS

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