

MAY: Week 1 – Arson Awareness

Overview: Arson can devastate a community, resulting in the decline of the neighborhood through increased insurance premiums, loss of business revenue, and a decline in property values. Arson is difficult to prosecute, but the effects are felt throughout the community: workers lose jobs, towns and cities lose tax dollars, burned buildings create blighted areas, and innocent people are injured or killed.

Uncontrolled arson, along with other serious crime, creates rampant fear among residents, business customers, and potential visitors. If the community's streets seem out of control, people will be afraid to come into that area to visit or do business. These conditions can quickly lead to a second stage where residents who can afford to move out begin selling homes, even at a loss, to escape before the bottom drops out. Property tax collections plummet, giving the community less resources to fight back.

Resources: The following resources are available:

- USFA Arson Awareness Week poster (2016)
 - https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/arson/2016_aaw_11x17_poster_press.pdf
- Arson motives (from USFA)
 - https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/wildfire_arson/arson_motives.html
- Arson reward programs (USFA)
 - https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/wildfire_arson/reward_programs.html
- Arson and intentional fires (NFPA)
 - <https://www.nfpa.org/arson>
- "Preventing Arson Together" PowerPoint
 - <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/public-education/by-topic/arson-and-intentional/nfpaarsonpresentation.ppt?as=1&iar=1&la=en>
- Intentional fires reports from NFPA
 - <http://www.nfpa.org/news-and-research/fire-statistics-and-reports/fire-statistics/fire-causes/arson-and-juvenile-firesetting/intentional-fires>
- Intentional fires fact sheet
 - <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/News-and-Research/Fire-statistics-and-reports/Fact-sheets/IntentionalFactSheet.ashx>

Media Tools: Use the following pre-written media releases and social media posts in your efforts to promote arson awareness:

- **Twitter**
 - Is your community doing everything possible to prevent arson fires? Find out what you can do here: <http://bit.ly/24unyNC>
 - Did you know more than 250K fires are set intentionally every year in the U.S.? Info on how to prevent arson: <http://bit.ly/24unyNC>
 - More than half a million wildfires are set by arsonists each year in the U.S. causing \$3 billion in damages. Go to: <http://bit.ly/24unyNC>
- **Facebook**
 - Is your community doing everything possible to prevent arson fires? Arson Awareness Week is an opportunity to focus your community on how to prevent these devastating acts. Find out what you can do here: <http://bit.ly/24unyNC>

- Did you know more than 250K fires are set intentionally every year in the U.S.? Most of these are outside fires, but some are structure fires, which can prove the most fatal. Do everything you can to help prevent arson! Go here for more info: <http://bit.ly/24unyNC>

Educator Tip: Attend a city council or county commission meeting sometime in the weeks leading up to Arson Awareness Week and present the following PowerPoint from NFPA: <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/public-education/by-topic/arson-and-intentional/nfpaarsonpresentation.ppt?as=1&iar=1&la=en>

This presentation effectively describes the steps any city or community should take to preventing arson. Getting everyone on board will be necessary in developing a neighborhood watch or city-wide awareness program when it comes to arson. It may help to suggest boarding up abandoned houses or lots, which can be attractive to arsonists.

Help spread the word about preventing arson in your community with these awareness materials from the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA): https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/arson_awareness.html.

NFPA/SFMO Messaging:

Arson Awareness Week (May 2-8, 2021)

By the Numbers: Intentionally Set Fires in Tennessee

- 2,199 fires were intentionally set on average each year between 2015 and 2019, representing 8.62% of all fires reported to fire departments.
- Intentionally set fires result in 4 deaths, 13 injuries, and \$11.6 million in direct property loss annually.
- The incidence of intentionally set fires peaks in the spring (March and April) and again in autumn (October and November).
- Matches (8.4%) and lighters (15.5%) are the leading heat sources of intentionally set fires.
- 63% of intentionally set fires occur in outside areas, including vehicles.
- 24% of intentionally set fires occur in structures.