

ARVADA FIRE

PROTECTION DISTRICT



Arvada Fire Protection District

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Letter from the Chief

BY: FIRE CHIEF JON GREER

I write this article with a heavy heart. The Arvada Fire family lost a valued member in September to cancer. It seems it's always the people who everyone thinks the world of, and would do anything for. He was diagnosed in September of 2016 with cancer and passed away almost one year to the day of diagnosis. He was an Arvada Firefighter for over 20 years.

What you may not know is that firefighters have a much higher chance of getting cancer than the general public. Studies conducted by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health demonstrate that cancer is the most dangerous and unrecognized threat to the health and safety of our nation's firefighters. Multiple studies have repeatedly demonstrated credible evidence and biologic credibility of statistically higher rates of multiple types of cancers in firefighters compared to the general American population, including:

- **Testicular cancer** (2.02 times greater risk)
- **Multiple myeloma** (1.53 times greater risk)
- **Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma** (1.51 times greater risk)
- **Skin cancer** (1.39 times greater risk)
- **Prostate cancer** (1.28 times greater risk)

- **Malignant melanoma** (1.31 times greater risk)
- **Brain cancer** (1.31 times greater risk)
- **Colon cancer** (1.21 times greater risk)
- **Leukemia** (1.41 times greater risk)

The main reason for this higher rate is the toxins firefighters are exposed to, and the historic lack of knowledge about the increased danger. When I became a firefighter in the 1970s, we only wore air packs, although often we didn't because at that time "real firefighters" ate the smoke and were proud of it.

Eventually we got over that misconception, but our bunker gear never got cleaned. The dirtier and nastier it looked and smelled the better firefighter you were. We did not change that until the 1990s, not because we worried about cancer, but because they smelled so terrible that our cars, homes, and stations reeked.

In addition, we did not realize the effect of the exposure of dangerous carcinogens in plastics both during and after a fire. Frankly, it was not good. Even though we wore air packs during the extinguishment phase, we did not wear them during the overhaul phase when we ensure there are no hidden fires. Though we didn't know it at the time, ANY smoke was dangerous and



some of the contaminants were invisible. There have been cases where the firefighter outside on the engine has been overcome with invisible gases.

The Arvada Fire Protection District has become more progressive than most in protecting our firefighters. Air packs are worn until the gas detectors we have say the air is clear. Our firefighters are decontaminated at the scene and their bunker gear taken to be washed immediately. They now have two sets of bunker gear for their use; in case there is a third fire, we have a cache of additional gear available. Bunker gear is not allowed in the station living quarters. The trucks are even decontaminated now.

Unfortunately, this did not happen fast enough to help the firefighter we lost in September. Firefighters are natural helpers and the fact that we could not help one of our own during his time of need left an impression on all of us. We will never forget him and personally it was an honor to have served with him. Thanks as always for letting us be your fire department. ■

Congratulations!

Lieutenant Nick Quintana



Congratulations to Nick Quintana for his promotion to Lieutenant.

Under the supervision of the shift Battalion Chief, the Lieutenant is responsible for all day-to-day operations of their assigned personnel, including leadership, motivation, and discipline of all members on their crew. Nick has been a dedicated member of Arvada Fire, providing mentorship and demonstrating a hard work ethic. He frequently goes above and beyond in his support for Arvada Fire. We are excited to have him in this new role!

Lieutenant Robb Roome



Lieutenant Robb Roome recently received the professional credentialing of Fire Officer

from the Center for Public Safety Excellence. This internationally-accepted model recognizes professional accomplishments and competence in fire and emergency services, and offers fire and emergency service personnel career guidance and planning. These designations were developed using a model that looks at the “whole” officer. Achieving the designation requires a strong educational background; diverse participation in emergency services at the local, state, and national level; and demonstrated involvement in the broader community, all validated by emergency service peers. We are proud to add Robb to the list with the other five members of Arvada Fire who also hold this credential.

EMS Chief Dave Mitchell



EMS Chief Dave Mitchell was recently appointed to the position of Vice President of the International Association of EMS Chiefs (IAEMSC). The IAEMSC’s mission is to promote and advance the leadership of EMS response entities and to advocate for the EMS profession. IAEMSC membership is made up of leaders from both career and volunteer EMS organizations and proudly represents and embraces the diversity of EMS agencies throughout the world. Chief Mitchell has proven to be a great leader within our organization and we know that IAEMSC will be very fortunate to have him on their team. ■

Winter Holiday Safety

Winter holidays are a time for families and friends to get together. But that also means a greater risk for fire. Following a few simple tips will ensure a happy and fire-safe holiday season.

Holiday Decorating

- Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufac-

turer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.

- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors.

Holiday Entertaining

- Test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan.
- Keep children and pets away from lit candles.
- Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop.
- Ask smokers to smoke outside. Remind smokers to keep their smoking materials with them so

Facts

- Two of every five home decoration fires are started by candles.
- Nearly half of decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source.

young children do not touch them.

- Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers. Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.
- Before Heading Out or Going to Bed**
Blow out lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed. ■

Arvada West High School Awards Chief Piper

Our very own Chief Mike Piper was recently inducted into the Arvada West High School Foundation's Hall of Fame. Mike was nominated for this award based on his demonstration of leadership, character, and service, and for the recognition of his peers for his high level of achievement in his field. In addition, he is being recognized for the significant contributions to the fire service at the community, state and national level.

When Mike attended Arvada West, he excelled in track and field and was the State champion in the 3200 meter run. Since his graduation from Arvada West, Mike received a bachelor's degree in Philosophy from the University of Colorado, and graduated from the Executive Fire Officer program at the

National Fire Academy. He has also achieved the Chief Fire Officer Designation from the Center for Public Safety Excellence and is a graduate from the Fire Service Executive Development Institute (FSEDI). Mike joined the Arvada Fire Department in 1991, serving as a volunteer firefighter. In 1999 he was hired as a career firefighter and progressed up the ranks to the level of Deputy Fire Chief of Operations.

For the past nine years he has overseen operations of 150 firefighters and officers. During that time the Department has undergone significant changes. The most significant is the implementation of fire-based medical transports in 2013. Mike, along with personnel from within his division, put together a

plan that seamlessly integrated the new service into the Department. Since that time the Department has become a leader in the provision of Emergency Medical Services in the region.

In 2012, Mike won the Pediatric Champion Award from the EMS for Children in Colorado for his work to prevent child falls from upper stories of buildings. He secured a grant to obtain grates, which were attached to upper level windows in apartment buildings, resulting in a significant drop in these types of calls. Mike continually looks for opportunities to expand and improve himself and the service that the department provides. He is a great role model to all. We are so happy to see his achievements recognized by the Foundation. ■

We Love Visiting Our Schools!

As a Fire Department our focus is not only about responding to emergencies but also working to prevent them from happening in the first place! Anytime we can get in front of students in our community, we teach valuable lessons to make themselves, their families, and our communities safer.

Our goal is to get in front of as many classrooms as we can. Help us make our community safer and invite us into your classroom, or share this information with your student's teacher. We can all play a role in helping keep our community safe. As we like to say, "fire is everyone's fight."

The following information describes a number of our lesson plans:

Fire Impact



The fire impact program is a youth fire setter intervention program. This program is run by certified

youth fire intervention specialists and is part of a national program. The program is not disciplinary; rather it helps assess the youth's interest in fire, provides proper education and additional resources, and recommendations as needed.

Preschool/ Kindergarten: Community Helpers



We use the fire truck as our classroom using color, shape, and size recognition to show

the fire truck and tools. In addition we dress up in our firefighter gear. We want to make sure that youth at

this age know that firefighters are their friends; we may look different with all of our gear, but there's no need to be afraid of us!

2nd Grade: Calling 9-1-1



In this lesson plan we cover when you should use **9-1-1**, who could respond to you if you

call that number, and the type of information that the youth might need to provide dispatchers in case of an emergency.

3rd Grade: Safety Sequencing



In this lesson, we use sequential thinking to teach fire safety. There is a take-home

assignment for the kids with a special surprise once the task is completed. We have even made a version of this comprehensive fire safety lesson plan that is more interactive so that it can be taught during P.E.! Either way we love to be invited into classrooms to teach this vital safety information.

Youth Cooking Fire Safety



We find that once youth hit middle school, they are more likely to be cooking on their own or helping their

family prepare meals. In addition, students are learning cooking skills in their FACS classes. One of the requirements of the course is that youth learn about safe cooking practices. We would love to be invited into your classroom or your community group to discuss cooking fire safety. We even have a really fun stovetop prop!

High School Driving Safety



It's no surprise that distracted driving is an issue. As the teenagers in our community start to get behind the

wheel, we want to remind them about the risks of distracted driving, and give them tips on how to be safer on the roads. ■

