

City of Bristol Tennessee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Fire Department Expands Public Education Services ***Burn Awareness Week February 1-7***

Bristol Tennessee Fire/Rescue is expanding their Public Safety Education services in an effort to prepare citizens for a myriad of emergencies. This announcement came from Assistant Fire Chief/Fire Marshal Jack Spurgeon who also heads the department's Public Education Division. Spurgeon stated, "The department's expanded public education role is a result of Fire Chief Barnes' goal for the department to be a positive, visible and proactive force in community emergency preparedness. Spurgeon continued, "We want to provide safety information and teach skills to the public on a regular basis, and hope interested citizens will take advantage of this educational opportunity". Burn Awareness Week is (Feb. 1-7, 2009) and preventing burn injuries and awareness education will be an ongoing effort. The series of programs will focus on Scald Injury, Electrical Safety to include Lighting Injuries, General Fire and Burn Safety for Older Adults, Leaving Home Safely (College Students), Gasoline Safety, and Summer Burn Safety.

Bristol Fire/Rescue responded to 141 calls with visible flames when the first emergency unit arrived on the scene. Last year 4,000 deaths occurred from fire and burns, 25,000 people were hospitalized at burn centers, and 600,000 were treated in hospital emergency departments from injuries. One burn or fire death alone is a devastating number that impacts many lives; but 4,000 deaths is an unnecessary number when technology or our own knowledge could have possibly prevented a death or serious injury.

One out of every 3 people will have a negative experience with fire during their lifetime. One-third of the numbers quoted above are related to scald burns that occur in our homes, usually in the kitchen or bathroom. Scald burns can be prevented by increased awareness of hazards and making simple environment or behavioral changes. There are the dos and don'ts with every product we utilize in our daily lives; so we need to utilize the instructions that come with a particular product or seek professional assistance if we are unsure on how to handle or install a product.

We hope through participation of our community's citizens, and our education efforts; we can reduce these alarming numbers. "You are ultimately the only one responsible for your personal safety", said Spurgeon.

BEST classes (Bristol Essential Safety Training) will be scheduled for May and June 2009. Information and dates about those classes will be released as they are finalized. If you desire additional information, contact Assistant Fire Chief Jack Spurgeon, Jr. at (423)989-5701.