



THE CITY OF ATHENS
PRESS RELEASE
ATHENS FIRE DEPARTMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Athens Fire Department urges safety in manufactured homes

Athens, TN – The City of Athens Fire Department is urging residents of manufactured homes – also known as mobile homes or trailers – to practice fire safety. More than 250,000 of these homes exist in Tennessee.

“Fires move more quickly in smaller spaces, leaving occupants with less time to escape. This is why it is crucial to have working smoke alarms installed in all homes “Develop and practice a home fire escape with your loved ones so that everyone knows what to do when the alarm sounds.”

While manufactured homes are no more prone to fire than homes built on site, the manufactured home fire can be severe. All residential homes can be better protected utilizing built-in fire protection systems such as fire sprinklers. These not only save lives, but property as well.

A fire in a home located in a rural area has a greater chance of becoming a “total loss fire” because of the increased amount of time needed for firefighters to reach the home. Lack of a working smoke alarms is also a factor often noted in fatal manufactured home fires.

There were 368 manufactured home fires reported statewide in 2012. Those fires claimed the lives of 14 Tennesseans, caused 19 non-fatal injuries and \$5.4 million in property damage. Manufactured home fires accounted for 18 percent of the state’s annual home fire fatalities last year.

If buying or renting a manufactured home is in your future, make sure you keep fire safety in mind. By following a few tips and knowing the facts and safety requirements for manufactured homes, you can help keep your family safe.

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Safety Tips

- Choose a manufactured home built after June 15, 1976, that has the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) label certifying that the home meets the minimum safety standards.
- Keep gasoline, charcoal lighter and other flammable liquids locked in an outdoor shed. Never store items under your manufactured home. Store firewood away from the home.
- Install skirting material to keep leaves and other debris and combustible items from blowing under your manufactured home where it could easily catch fire and spread into the home.
- Be sure your manufactured home has enough smoke alarms. If your home does not have smoke alarms in or near every sleeping room and in or near the family/living area(s), immediately install new alarms and fresh batteries to protect these rooms. For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Have a home fire escape plan that includes two ways out of every room and an outside meeting place. Make sure all ways out of the home are cleared of clutter and easy to use. Practice your fire escape plan at least twice a year.
- If smoke alarms sound when cooking, consider moving the alarm further from the kitchen area or install a photoelectric type alarm which is less sensitive to cooking.
- Consider having a licensed electrician inspect the electrical system in your manufactured home to be sure it is safe and meets applicable National Electrical Code® requirements.
- Never add too many plugs to outlets, extension cords or electrical circuits. If the circuit breaker trips or fuses blow, call a licensed electrician to check your system.
- Have smokers smoke outside the home. Provide large, non-tip ashtrays and empty them frequently. Douse butts with water before throwing them away.
- Do not smoke in bed or in a chair in which you are prone to fall asleep.
- Keep space heaters and candles at least three feet away from anything that can burn. Turn off portable space heaters and blow out candles before falling asleep or when leaving a room.
- When considering a new manufactured home, ask if residential sprinklers are available as an option.

For additional information on manufactured homes, contact the Tennessee Housing Association at 615-256-4733.

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