

Dear Neighbors,

As fall continues and the winter months quickly approach, I strongly encourage community members to take a few simple preventative measures to help keep your families safe.

With flood season approaching and conditions changing frequently, please plan for road closures and do not cross water-covered roadways. Every year, our water rescue team responds to help people who did not heed the “road closed” signs or the warnings to evacuate before a particular road floods. Please take these signs and warnings seriously for your own safety as well as the safety of our responders.

This year, we are using the latest Internet technologies to communicate with you during the flood season or during any emergency situation that may affect you. Please “follow” us at [www.twitter.com/monroefire](http://www.twitter.com/monroefire) for real time updates. You can also get the latest information by logging onto our website at [www.monroefire.org](http://www.monroefire.org). Another resource we will be utilizing this year is Google Maps. We will be able to highlight areas or roads that may be washed out or other locations where emergency response times could be affected due to weather conditions. We will continue to use reverse 911 to call those who may be impacted by flooding with a recorded evacuation advisory message. As always, you can still reach us by calling 360-794-7666.

I am particularly concerned about two life threatening issues this season. Every winter, we see an increase in the number of residential fires and carbon monoxide poisonings. Most of these incidents are preventable! Many people use space heaters, generators, and BBQs during the cold months. These items must be used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions in order to reduce your chance of being injured or catching your house on fire. I would like to offer some safety tips based on what our firefighters see in our district every year:

- Always use generators and barbeque grills outdoors, away from doors, windows and vents. Never use generators or barbeque grills inside homes, garages, basements, crawl spaces or other enclosed or partially enclosed areas, even with ventilation. Carbon monoxide can accumulate, leading to serious illness or death.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms in your home to alert your family to dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. Remember that carbon monoxide is colorless and odorless. You will not know it is present in your home or at toxic levels without a carbon monoxide alarm.
- Have your furnace and chimney professionally inspected annually and cleaned if necessary. Check for cracks or obstructions monthly. Chimney tar and creosote buildup is a common cause of chimney fires.

- Space heaters need space; keep combustibles at least three feet away from each heater. Buy only heaters with the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) safety listing. Check to make sure it has a thermostat control mechanism, and will switch off automatically if the heater falls over. Heaters are not dryers or tables; don't dry clothes or store objects on top of your heater. Always unplug your electric space heater when not in use.
- Finally, having a working smoke alarm dramatically increases your chances of surviving a fire. Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home and inside (or just outside) of every sleeping area. To have Monroe firefighters install free smoke alarms in your home, call our Fire Prevention Division at 360-805-0338 or email [rrisdon@monroefire.org](mailto:rrisdon@monroefire.org). If you install residential fire sprinklers *and* have working smoke alarms, you decrease your risk of dying in a home fire by 82%. With fire sprinklers costing an average of \$1.61 per square foot, this is a smart way to invest in your family's safety.

Yours in Public Safety,

Jamie Silva

Fire Chief

Monroe Fire District #3