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Fire Management Program Center  
Structural Fire  
3833 South Development Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83705-5354

# Structural Fire Newsletter

**Mike Warren**  
Program Manager  
208-387-5209

**Hal Spencer**  
Training and Education  
208-387-5245

**Rod Losson**  
Concession Specialist  
865-436-1272

**Sheila Williams**  
Project Coordinator  
208-387-5203

**Know who your  
Regional Structural  
Fire contact is. They  
are found on the  
back of this  
newsletter.**

## NPS Structural Fire Reporting System

Our Structural Fire Reporting System has been growing. Through September there have been 174 incidents officially reported in the system for calendar year 2002. **Congratulations to the IM Region, they have placed 125 incidents in the system this year, keep up the good work!** Remember a Structural Fire is any fire that is not classified as a wildland fire and is required to be reported in our system. To place your incidents in the reporting system go to <http://165.83.41.100/structal/incidentreport/index.htm>

## Smoke Alarms

Structural Fire has been working to get the word out on Smoke Alarms. Roughly 19 out of 20 (or 95%) of U.S. households have smoke alarms, but one-fifth of those homes remain unprotected because the alarms aren't working. When fire deaths occur in homes that have smoke alarms, half those deaths are in homes where the alarm did not sound. The most common reason is dead, missing or disconnected batteries. You should change the batteries when the smoke alarm chirps to warn you that power is getting low, when you change your clock from Daylight Savings Time to Standard Time, and when you move into a new home. Replace the entire smoke alarm, whether hard-wired or battery-powered, if it is more than 10 years old. (Source NFPA)

## Northeast Hires New Senior Fire Inspector

**Donna Baumgaertner**  
Senior Fire Inspection, Northeast Region

Supervisory Park Ranger Donna Baumgaertner from Edison National Historic Site has been selected to fill a new position in the Northeast Region Structural Fire program within the Ranger Services Group. The position will be duty stationed in Philadelphia at the regional office. Donna will be working closely with Regional Structural Fire Management Officer Joe Mazzeo in providing technical and professional assistance to the southern tier of parks within the region.

Donna has been responsible for the Inspection, Testing and Maintenance program for the fire detection, alarm and suppression systems in the historic structures located at the Edison site for many years. She is the site Safety Officer and Fire Marshall working closely with the local fire department to provide a fire safe environment. Donna has a Bachelors Degree in Outdoor Recreation and Park Management. She also earned an Associates Degree in Fire Science while at the park.

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<http://www.nps.gov/fire/structal>  
Program Manager Contact: 208-387-5209

## **With the onset of Fall and Winter ensure you are following these safe practices:**

### **Space Heaters Need Space**

Keep portable and space heaters at least 3 feet from anything that may burn. Never leave heaters on when you leave home or go to sleep. Children and pets should always be kept away from them.

### **Clean Your Chimney**

Make a clean sweep for autumn. Give your fireplace a fall cleaning. Call your local chimney sweep and have your spark arrester checked and your chimney inspected for soot build-up.

### **Holidays**

Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat about 10,800 people for injuries, such as falls, cuts and shocks, related to holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees. In addition, there are 11,000 candle-related fires each year, resulting in 150 deaths and 1,200 injuries annually. Christmas trees are involved in about 400 fires annually, resulting in 20 deaths, 70 injuries and an average of more than \$15 million in property loss and damage.

### **Trees**

When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree will not catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly. When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles. When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators.

### **Lights**

Use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory. Use only lights that have fused plugs. Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets. Always replace burned-out bulbs promptly with the same wattage bulbs. Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord. Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use. Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house.

### **Decorations**

Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children. Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down. Wear gloves to avoid eye and skin irritation while decorating with spun glass "angel hair." Follow container directions carefully to avoid lung irritation while decorating with artificial snow sprays.

## **Regional Structural Fire Management Officers**

### **Alaska**

Denny Sutherland  
2525 Gambell Street  
Anchorage, AK 99503  
907-257-2477  
907-257-2485 fax

### **Intermountain**

Bruce Goodwin  
12795 W. Alameda Parkway  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, CO 80225-0287  
303-969-2643  
303-969-2037 fax

### **Midwest**

Kip Schwabe  
1709 Jackson Street  
Omaha, NE 68102  
402-342-4640  
402-342-3524 fax

### **National Capital**

Don Boucher  
302 E. Main St.  
P.O. Box 158  
Sharpsburg, MD 21782-0158  
202-619-7039  
301-432-7891 fax

### **Northeast**

Joe Mazzeo  
15 State St.  
Boston, MA 02109  
617-223-5221  
617-223-5165 fax

### **Pacific West**

Curtis Troutt  
1111 Jackson St., Suite 700  
Oakland, CA 94607  
510-817-1520  
510-817-1488 fax

### **Southeast**

George Bergen  
1924 Building  
100 Alabama St., SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
404-562-3108x574  
404-562-3200 fax

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<http://www.nps.gov/fire/structural>

Program Manager Contact: 208- 387- 5209