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News Release

For Immediate Release

Fire Department Responses Up in 2012

Springfield fire fighters responded to a total of 1,024 fires in 2012, compared to 951 in 2011. That's a nearly 8% increase. However, those numbers don't tell the whole story. The total number of residential fires actually fell from 205 in 2011 to 186 in 2012 – a drop of 10%.

Drought could be to blame.

The increase in total fires is most likely due to the dry conditions Springfield experienced, particularly during the summer months. The total number of outside fires increased 36% in 2012, going from 199 in 2011 to 270 in 2012. Most of those consisted of grass fires, brush fires and natural vegetation fires.

Careless smoking is still a concern.

Springfield experienced a record number of fires caused by careless smoking in 2012. The number of careless smoking fires rose nearly 23%, from 88 in 2011 to 108 in 2012. Large fires at Chardonnay Apartments and Lakeshore Apartments were started when tenants improperly disposed of cigarettes on wood balconies.

Deaths up; injuries down.

Six residents died as a result of fire in 2012, compared to 4 in 2011. Both are higher than Springfield's average of 3.2 fire deaths per year. However, the number of fire injuries fell in 2012 to 21, from 28 in the previous year.

EMS calls continue to dominate.

More than half the calls Springfield firefighters respond to are emergency medical calls. In 2012, firefighters responded to 7,779 EMS calls, up slightly from 7,390 in 2011. That accounts for more than 55% of all incidents. The Springfield Fire Department will continue to focus on injury prevention in an effort to reduce these numbers.

Focus on fire safety education is key.

The Springfield Fire Department has increased its focus on fire safety, educating residents about how to prevent and respond to fires. Families should create a home evacuation plan and practice it regularly. They should practice cooking safety and smoke responsibly. And every home needs working smoke alarms. Families should replace the batteries at least once a year. Springfield residents in need of a smoke alarm can receive a free one by calling the Springfield Fire Department at (417) 864-1500.

For more information, contact: Fire and Life Safety Educator Cara Restelli Erwin, (417) 864-1699 or Cora Scott at (417) 380-3352.