

November 01, 2013

News Release

*For Immediate Release*

### **Fire Department begins campaign to reduce apartment fires**

In the last three years in the City of Springfield, fire crews have responded to more than 150 apartment fires. Of those, 67% have been ruled as an accidental cause with more than half caused by careless smoking. Apartment fires are particularly concerning to the fire service because one person's actions puts dozens of lives at risk. To address this issue, the Springfield Fire Department will begin an educational campaign to help address what we are seeing as an upward trend in apartment fires that could potentially be prevented.

For three Saturday afternoons in November, beginning November 2, Springfield Fire Companies have been assigned to nearly 70 apartment complexes throughout the City. Our focus is the distribution of educational materials that contain fire prevention and fire code information specific to apartment living – topics that we have seen as the cause of fires in apartments such as careless smoking, BBQ grill usage, and general housekeeping. Fire Companies visiting these apartment complexes during a non-emergency event creates an opportunity for the Fire Department to be seen by the residents, which ties in with the information being distributed.

For the last year, the Springfield Fire Department has visited apartment complexes following smoking-related fires to distribute information about the dangers of smoking. This apartment canvass builds upon that campaign by being proactive in an effort to prevent fires. This campaign is supported by the property owners and managers of the complexes targeted during the canvass.

For media only

Media are welcome to attend our canvass, with permission of the property owner. For a list of which complexes we will be visiting, contact Fire and Life Safety Educator Cara Erwin at 864-1699 or [cerwin@springfieldmo.gov](mailto:cerwin@springfieldmo.gov).