



Staffordshire

Fire and Rescue Service

preventing • protecting • responding

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CAMPAIGN MAKES A CLEAN SWEEP FOR CHIMNEY FIRE SAFETY

Firefighters have issued a timely reminder for residents to make sure their chimneys and log burners are well-maintained as we approach the colder months.

The Service is supporting Chimney Fire Safety Week, September 5-11, and is going one step further by extending the campaign to cover the whole month.

In the past three years there have been 290 chimney fires across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent – luckily there were no casualties as a result.

More than 80 per cent of the incidents occurred during evening hours, peaking between 5pm-7pm.

The Service is urging people to avoid becoming a statistic by taking some simple steps to keep themselves and their families safe.

It is providing local fuel suppliers, fire installers and chimney sweeps with an advice leaflet to give to customers.

Firefighters and Community Safety Officers will also be highlighting the safety messages when they attend events or visit homes across the county.

People are being encouraged to follow the top tips below:

- Ensure the fire is extinguished before going to bed or leaving the house

- Ensure good quality fuel is used
- If you use smokeless fuel, sweep your chimney at least once a year
- If you use bituminous coal, sweep your chimney at least twice a year
- If you use wood, sweep your chimney quarterly when in use
- If you use oil, sweep your chimney once a year
- If you use gas, have your chimney swept by a Gas Safe registered installer/engineer once a year

Community Safety Lead James Russell said: "We have been very fortunate in that the 290 chimney fires in Staffordshire over the past three years have not resulted in any casualties. However, we want to keep it that way and to further reduce the number of avoidable blazes breaking out in the first place.

"The impact of chimney fires can be quite distressing as well as potentially having a financial impact on householders. It is far cheaper, and far safer, to prevent the incident even occurring by paying around £50 for a qualified sweep such as those certified by National Association of Chimney Sweeps (NACS) to carry out the job.

"As a general safety precaution, we would also urge people to fit at least one working smoke alarm on each level of their home and to test them on a weekly basis. It doesn't take a lot of effort but it could potentially save your life and your family's life."

For more information on chimney safety visit:

<http://www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/2333.asp>

ENDS