

**From:** claire strauss

**Sent:** Thursday, March 26, 2015 2:36 PM

**To:** bethabraham

**Subject:** Letter from Fire Chief

Attached is the letter we were asked to forward to the entire community in light of the tragic fire in Brooklyn. Following Pesach, we will be setting up an evening for the Fire Chief to speak to the community with regard to fire safety and address their concerns.

This letter is just the beginning of a greater involvement with the fire department to be proactive and reduce the risk of tragedy.

=====

Recent events in Brooklyn have once again focused attention on the need to assure fire safety in our homes. A swift moving fire claimed the lives of 7 innocent children from an Orthodox family. So how do we make sure that we have done everything possible to protect our own families?

First, make sure that your home is equipped with working smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms. There should be a smoke detector outside each sleeping area. Having a smoke detector in each bedroom is even better. The battery in each smoke detector should be changed every time you change your clock setting in the spring and in the fall (Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery). Your smoke alarms may be hard wired, meaning they are hooked up to the AC electric wires in your house. But there is a good chance that the smoke detector also has a battery back-up just in case the electricity goes out. You should test your smoke detector at least weekly, but before you do, make sure that you call your private alarm monitoring company to tell them you are testing your fire alarms. Otherwise, when you test and activate the smoke detectors, you will be getting a visit from the members of the Bergenfield Fire Department.

Second, test your carbon monoxide alarm by depressing the test button found on the CO alarm. These CO alarms have a reliable life expectancy of 5 years. If your CO alarm activates, evacuate the house and call 9-1-1. Tell the operator that the CO alarm activated and everyone is out of the house. We will respond and use our meters to check out the house. Many times, the alarm sounds because of a malfunction or perhaps cooking for an extended period of time without opening a window or a door to circulate the air in your house with fresh outdoor air. We have had a number of instances in Bergenfield where we have

discovered loose or broken exhaust pipes or malfunctioning appliances that generate large quantities of carbon monoxide in lethal doses. Carbon monoxide is colorless, odorless and tasteless. If you come home to find members of your family complaining of headaches, dizziness and exhibiting a flush complexion, get everyone out of the house and call 9-1-1 immediately. They may be suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning.

Third, observing requirements of the Sabbath and other holy days leads to families using hot plates and other food warming devices. When choosing one of these devices, please make sure that the warming tray comes with a label from a nationally recognized testing laboratory such as UL or FM. Plug these units directly into an electrical receptacle. Refrain from using an extension cord, especially an extension cord that is light weight and not able to carry the electrical load.

Fourth, candles should be used carefully. Never, under any circumstance, should you go to bed or leave candles burning unattended unless you are in the room, awake and alert. Keep lit candles away from any and all combustibles. Place candles on a non-combustible surface and put them out when leaving the room.

Fifth, there is always a possibility of a fire happening in your home. You and your children should have a designated meeting place outside of the home. This is where everyone should go if there is a fire in your house. Once outside, call 9-1-1 to report the fire, even if your fire alarm system has activated. A call from your alarm monitoring company only tells us that the alarm has activated. You can tell the emergency operator so much more, including what is on fire or where the fire is as well as if all occupants are out of the house. That is very important information to us while we are on the way to your home.

Your safety and the safety of your family are our most important priority. We hope these tips are useful. If you have any other questions regarding fire safety please call the fire prevention bureau at 201-387-4074. You will be asked your name and a contact phone number as well as what you are calling for. We will make sure your call is returned promptly and your inquiry addressed.

The Bergenfield Fire Department is at your disposal 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please do not hesitate to call us if you need us. We are here to serve you.

Jerry Naylis, Fire Chief