



OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS STATE FIRE MARSHAL

JB Pritzker, Governor
Matt Perez, State Fire Marshal

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The OSFM Recognizes Arson Awareness Week 2021

In 2020, the OSFM Arson Division Closed 53 cases with an arrest.

Springfield, Ill- In recognition of Arson Week, the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is raising awareness about the seriousness of this crime and educating Illinois residents about the true cost of arson and its impact on individuals and communities. Arson Awareness Week 2021 (May 2-8), highlights critical actions that first responders must take to help ensure a safe response to arson fires during periods of civil unrest.

According to the United States Fire Administration, an estimated 210,300 fires are intentionally set each year. Losses resulting from these fires included approximately 375 civilian deaths, 1,300 civilian injuries, and \$1 billion in direct property damage. The incidence of these fires typically peaks in March and April and again in July. In 2020, OSFM Arson Special Agents responded to 1,051 investigations and canine teams assisted in 230 investigations. In 2020, the OSFM's Arson Division closed 53 arson related cases with an arrest. The OSFM Arson Division consist of seven Accelerant Detection Canines and 15 Special Agents who aid and assist fire and police department across the state.

"Arson is a serious crime and I encourage communities and fire departments to work together to help raise awareness to prevent these fires that are costing people their lives and needlessly putting firefighters in dangerous situations. If you see something, say something," **said Illinois State Fire Marshal Matt Perez.** "I encourage departments to review their plans for dealing with arson related to civil unrest, as we have seen an increase in activity over the past year and a half. Keeping firefighter safe on the fireground should be a top priority, while still working to effectively protect the lives and property in their communities."

A statewide **Arson Hotline, (800) 252-2947**, has been established so that citizens may anonymously provide information about a suspicious fire that has occurred or may occur.

Arson fires are preventable through education and awareness such as the Youth Fire Setter Intervention Program. To request help from this program you can call 1-844-689-7882 or visit the OSFM website at www.sfm.illinois.gov.



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These tips listed below can help reduce the risk of arson:

- Keep leaves, firewood, overgrown brush and shrubbery and other combustibles away from buildings.
- Keep doors and windows locked when a building is unoccupied. Board up abandoned buildings. Do not use double cylinder deadbolt locks without keeping a key nearby, bars without quick release mechanisms, or other security provisions that could trap a person in a building with a deadly fire.
- Store all flammable liquids such as; paints, gasoline, and mowers in an approved storage location: locked cabinets, locked storage units, and locked garages (prevent access to kids). Also, keep away from heat sources such as furnaces and any type of heaters.
- Report suspicious activity near houses or other buildings to the local police and support Neighborhood Watch programs.
- If you suspect a child is setting fires, notify the proper authorities. Keep matches and lighters out of reach and out of sight of young children.
- If you know or suspect that an arson crime has been committed, contact your local fire or police department.

For more information about arson prevention and the OSFM Arson Division, visit www.sfm.illinois.gov.

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