

South Elgin & Countryside Fire Protection District Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How often should I change the battery in my smoke detector?

A. Batteries in smoke detectors should be changed twice a year, it is easy to remember that when you change your clocks to change your smoke detector battery also.

Q. What should I do if my fire alarm goes off in my home or commercial building that I work or visit?

A. Anytime a fire alarm goes off you are to evacuate the building and call 9-1-1. Do not re-enter the building until the fire department arrives on the scene and gives an all clear that the building is safe to return to. DO NOT RESET THE ALARM. The fire department will not be able to determine what the cause of the activation was.

Q. What should I do if my Carbon Monoxide Detector goes off?

A. Keep all windows and doors closed, exit the house and call 911 from a neighbor's house or from your cell phone. Doors and windows are closed so that the fire department can get an actual reading and try to locate the problem. If the house is vented, the fire department will detect lower readings if there is a problem.

Q. Do you offer CPR Courses?

A. Yes. We provide monthly CPR training in conjunction with the South Elgin Parks and Recreation Department. Enrollment and information can be obtained by contacting the Parks and Rec Department @ 847-622-0003.

Q. I have a question or concern about the fire District Operations – what is the best way to address these?

A. We sincerely appreciate our residents and businesses taking the time out of their schedules to learn more about our District. Persons with specific questions or concerns are encouraged to contact us at the station @ 847-741-2141. If we are unable to answer the question immediately, we will endeavor to find an answer and call them back.

Q. Why does a fire engine respond if I call for an ambulance?

A. On all of South Elgin Fire Protection District's front line fire engines there are at least one or two licensed paramedics that can start initiating care if they should arrive before the ambulance. The crews also assist the paramedics with lifting patients and assisting with medical care to ensure you are given the best treatment possible.

Q. Why are the tornado sirens going off?

A. When a tornado warning is issued, the sirens are activated to alert the public that a tornado has either been sighted by a trained spotter or that the National Weather Service has indicated one on radar. You are to take cover immediately in a basement or center room with no windows in your house. PLEASE do not call the Police or Fire Stations as the personnel on duty become very busy at this time. Turn on an AM radio or television for weather updates and wait for an ALL CLEAR to be reported. Sirens are tested on the first Tuesday of each month.

Q. How often should I have my fireplace and furnace checked?

A. Have your furnace cleaned and checked once a year by a trained technician, also have them check your furnace and gas water heater for proper venting. Wood burning fireplaces should also be cleaned once a year to remove any soot build up which becomes flammable. Have the chimney sweep check the mortar joints in a brick fireplace for any cracking or open joints.

Q. I saw an article in a local newspaper column asking about the District not constructing an East Side Fire Station – What is the story behind the delays in construction this station?

There are no immediate plans to construct this station. The property was secured in a land-swap agreement with the Village of South Elgin in anticipation of future residential and commercial growth on the Village's East Side. The downturn in the housing market had slowed the East Side development activity and our data indicates we are currently reaching our response goals of the emergency calls to the area that this station would eventually serve. We continue to track and monitor the response times and call volumes to this (and all of our response areas).

Q. I received a telephone call today asking if I could make a financial donation that would benefit the South Elgin Fireman's widow fund....Is this call legitimate?

A. NO! At no time do we conduct, or have conducted on our behalf any (for any reason) telemarketing calls.

Q. I have been told I need a Knox Box for my business...how do I obtain one of these?

A. These boxes are purchased through an independent vendor but the ordering forms have to be picked up from one of our fire stations and must be signed by a department authorized representative to assure that the correct box is ordered and is installed in a proper location.

Q. I have heard that state law now requires carbon monoxide detectors in each home. Where should I place the detectors?

A. In 2006, the Illinois General Assembly passed a law which requires the placement of Carbon Monoxide Detectors in residences. Public Act 94-741 mandates that every dwelling unit in Illinois must be equipped with at least one carbon monoxide alarm within 15 feet of every room used for sleeping purposes. This law became effective January 1, 2007.

Q. How do I become a part time Firefighter with South Elgin FPD?

A. At this time South Elgin FPD has no plans for a Firefighter Recruit Program. We do accept applications for persons who have a minimum of a Firefighter II Certificate and are either a Paramedic (preferred) or an EMT-B. Applications can be picked up at Station 21, 150 W. State St, South Elgin.

Q. Am I allowed to conduct open burning on my property?

A. The answer to this question depends upon many factors...where you live, what you are burning, and when do you wish to burn just to name a few. You are advised to contact the fire department shift commander on duty (847)741-2141 prior to conducting any open burning. Generally speaking, open burning is not allowed within the Village limits other than burning for legitimate cooking purposes. In the unincorporated areas, burning is typically restricted to self-generated yard waste (branches and leaves) during certain hours of the day. Other restrictions include atmospheric conditions and type of zoning.

Q. How do I get rid of old cans of paint, gasoline, batteries, fire extinguishers or other household hazardous waste?

A. The South Elgin Fire Protection District does not take household-hazardous waste products. Check with the County that you live in to inquire whether or not a designated hazardous waste disposal drop-off location has been established for your area. Kane County residents can call the Kane County Recycles Office @ (630)208-3841. DO NOT THROW THESE ITEMS IN THE TRASH.

There is a battery recycling center located at our Annex Station on 8N709 Stevens Rd in South Elgin. This is a drop off for household batteries only.

The fire department does not fill or dispose of fire extinguishers. Most household fire extinguishers are disposable and cannot be re-charged because the cylinders are made of plastic. Metal fire extinguishers can be re-charged by a fire extinguisher company which you can find in the Yellow Pages. Contact the manufacturer or the county you live in to dispose of fire extinguishers.