



# Newsletter

*Proudly Serving Upper Dublin Since 1908*

*February, 2010*

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This is one of a series of newsletters from the Fort Washington Fire Company No.1 in an effort to keep the citizens and taxpayers of Upper Dublin informed about the many and varied activities carried out by our organization. Anyone may opt out of receiving these e-mailed newsletters by clicking on the unsubscribe link at the bottom of this Newsletter. In each newsletter we will endeavor to provide information that is informative, useful and even entertaining.

## This Month Around The Fire House

In January the Fort Washington Fire Company responded to 38 Alarms, averaging 20.8 responders per call, totaling 422 responder hours.

For All of 2009 the Fort Washington Fire Company responded to 622 Alarms, averaging 19.5 responders per call and totaling 5699 responder hours For a multi-year comparison visit our website under Activities/Statistics. .



## Recent Fires Cause Significant Damage

**By Eric Clauson, photos by Jeff Ollis**

FWFC Fire Fighters responded to two recent fires. On Monday January 18th, 2 trucks from Fort Washington were called to assist the Horsham Fire Company on Church Road in Horsham Township. This fire involved a twin dwelling and the fire had begun to spread from the original dwelling to the one next door. FWFC members stretched a hoseline to the 2nd floor of the original dwelling and were able to extinguish a large amount of fire on the second floor and attic. FWFC members also assisted in the house next door by locating hidden fire and salvaging belongings. Thanks to the efforts of several fire companies, damage to the house next door was minimized and the fire was kept from spreading to nearby homes, which were in close proximity. Luckily no injuries were reported.



**Visit our Website [www.FortWashingtonFC.org](http://www.FortWashingtonFC.org)**

## Recent Fires, Continued



On Wednesday January 20th, FWFC was dispatched to Jeffrey Drive in the Dresher section of the Township for a house fire. It was originally thought that people were trapped in the house so FWFC members immediately began searching for occupants. Luckily, it was later learned that no one was home. Two hoselines were stretched into the house and it was discovered that there was a fire on the first floor and basement. FWFC members aggressively attacked the fire and were able to save much of the house from further damage. FWFC was assisted by Edge Hill and Oreland Fire Companies.



**Mark Your Calendars... The next FWFC Indoor Flea Market will occur on Saturday, April 3rd 8 AM to 2 PM — Rain or Shine**



## Join Us, Become A Volunteer

*The Fort Washington Fire Company is a 100% volunteer organization and is always seeking new members. We have several types of membership, which do not all involve fire fighting. All training and equipment is provided by the fire company.*

### Junior Members- Age 16-17.

*Go through regular training and provide fire ground support functions, but are not permitted to operate in hazardous environments until they reach the age of 18. Many of our current members started as junior members.*

### Firefighters-Age 18 and up.

*Respond to fire calls and undergo extensive training at one of the local fire academies as well as in-house training through the fire company.*

### Fire Police-

*Provide traffic control and crowd control at emergency scenes as well as special events such as parades and carnivals.*

### Ladies Auxiliary

*The Ladies Auxiliary assists the Fire Company, by promoting sociability among members and aiding the financial and general well being of the fire company.*

### Associate Members-

*Provide administrative support to the fire company. These administrative functions include, but are not limited to, accounting, clerical, computer networking and programming, facility management, etc*

## Training Update

### By Eric Clauson

The year 2010 is off to a busy start for FWFC members. We are in the process of completing our re-certifications in CPR/First Aid and Blood Borne Pathogens and recently held our annual SCBA certification drill. In the coming months, we will also complete annual Hazardous Materials refresher training.

Looking back, 2009 was a very successful year in terms of FWFC training. We held 49 Monday night training sessions, each averaging 2-1/2 hours, and also had members attend hundreds of additional hours of outside training at local fire academies and seminars. Here are some of the highlights:

- Our Monday night drills averaged 49 members per drill! This is an outstanding number and reflects our commitment to training.
- We completed a High Rise Firefighting Class through the PA State Fire Academy.
- We held 5 burn building drills at our own training facility and at Montgomery County Fire Academy.
- Held 4 hands on drills at an acquired house on Dreshertown Road and were assisted by FWFC and Baltimore Fire Department member Jerry Smith, Jr.
- Held training with PennStar to learn about helicopter safety and landing zone procedures.
- Completed two tours of Upper Dublin High School during construction phase.
- Completed Water Rescue Awareness training with plans to start advanced training in 2010.
- Had several members become nationally certified in Fire Fighter 1, Instructor 1 and Officer 2. In addition, members attended classes in vehicle rescue, high angle rescue and collapse rescue.

As you can see, we dedicate a lot of time and energy to training. This is something that has always been important to the success of the FWFC and will continue to be in the future.

## Some May Wonder...

### By Tim Evard

**Why do fire trucks with full lights and sirens go through a red light at intersections and then, after they go through, they turn off their lights and slow down?**

Almost always, several units are dispatched to the same incident. The first unit may have arrived on the scene, assessed the situation and informed the dispatcher that the situation was under control or that a single unit could handle the emergency. All other responding units were cancelled and put back into service, ready to take another call.

Most likely, when you see an emergency vehicle with red lights and sirens go through an intersection and then slow down and turn the emergency lights off, they have been cancelled from the call to which they were responding.

**Why do firefighters cut holes in the roof of a building on fire?**

This is called "venting the roof." There are two basic reasons for this practice. Dangerous superheated gases and dark smoke accumulate in a burning building. Unlike the movie versions of fires, it is impossible for firefighters to see in such an environment or for victims to survive. When a hole is made in the roof,

and the building is "vented," the smoke and gases escape because heat and smoke rise. It increases the victim's chance for survival and makes it much easier for the firefighters in the building to see. It also reduces the possibilities of backdraft (explosion) and flashover. Another reason for venting the roof is to see how far the fire has progressed. One of the fastest avenues through which fires spread is the attic. Heat and smoke rise into the attic where the fire can move quickly. Firefighters may go ahead of the fire on a roof and cut holes to access the attic to stop the fire from spreading through the attic.

**Why do firefighters break windows in a building that is on fire?**

Dangerous superheated gases need to be ventilated to allow firefighters to safely and quickly rescue trapped occupants and extinguish the fire. By venting the window (horizontal ventilation) of a room that is on fire, it actually helps to contain the fire within that room of origin. Otherwise heated gases spread throughout the inside of the house. Breaking the window really prevents a great deal more damage than it appears to cause. Replacing broken glass is much less expensive than repairing structural damage from the fire.



**Station A**  
**220 Summit Ave**  
**Fort Washington PA**  
**19034**



**Station B**  
**Susquehanna and**  
**Twining Roads**  
**Dresher PA 19025**



**Fire Training Grounds**  
**Twining Road**

**We Hold drills each**  
**Monday Night at 7 PM**

**Our Business Meetings**  
**are held the 2nd**  
**Thursday of each**  
**month at 7:30 PM**

**Contact Information**  
**220 Summit Avenue**  
**Fort Washington PA**  
**19034**

**215-646-2555**

# Home Fire Sprinkler Systems

By Howard Schmuckler

In 2007, there were 414,000 residential fires, 2,895 civilian fire deaths, and \$7.5 Billion in property damage. If more residences were equipped with a home fire sprinkler system, these statistics would certainly be lower. Properly installed and maintained automatic fire sprinkler systems can help save lives and property.

Because fire sprinkler systems react so quickly, they can dramatically reduce the heat, flames, and smoke that are produced in a fire. If you have a reported fire in your home, the risk of dying decreases by about 80 percent when sprinklers are present, and homes with sprinklers average 71% less property loss.



Today, residential sprinklers that are approved by Underwriters Laboratories are designed to respond to a fire much faster because of their improved sensitivity. For residential systems, the sprinklers will be smaller than traditional, commercial, and industrial sprinklers, and can be aesthetically coordinated with any room décor.



## Common Myths about residential fire sprinkler systems:

1. It is NOT true that when one sprinkler head goes off, that all of the sprinkler heads will also. Only the sprinkler over the fire will activate. The sprinkler heads react to temperatures, so only those heads that sense the heat will activate.

If there is a fire in the kitchen, only the sprinkler head in that room, and the one above the fire, will activate.

2. It is very UNLIKELY that a sprinkler head would accidentally go off, causing severe water damage to a home. Home sprinklers are specifically designed and rigorously tested to minimize such accidents

3. Water damage from a sprinkler system will NOT be more extensive than fire damage. The sprinkler system will limit a fire's growth. Therefore, damage from a home sprinkler system will be much less severe than the smoke and fire damage that would result if the fire is given the time to grow (spread) until the fire department is called, responds and extinguishes the fire. Also the water damage caused by the sprinkler system is much less than the water damage caused by water from firefighting hose lines, as the fire hoses flow a significantly greater amount of water than does a sprinkler head.

4. It is NOT expensive to install a residential fire sprinkler system. When homes are under construction or being remodeled, a home sprinkler system will require minimal extra piping and labor. Current estimates are that when a home is under construction, a home sprinkler system could cost 1%-1½% of the total building price. That is \$1,000 - \$1,500 for a \$100,000 house, \$2,000 - \$2,500 for a \$200,000 house, \$3,000 - \$3,500 for a \$300,000 house ..... It is definitely an insignificant amount for any



part of the house, especially for something that could save your life, or the lives of your family.

Sprinklers are highly reliable. When present in an area where there is a fire, they operate correctly in all but 7% of fires large enough to activate the system. Human error was a factor in almost all of the failures. The system was shut-off in almost two-thirds of the failures.

To further support the value of sprinkler systems, the National Fire Protection Association has no record of a fire killing more than two people in a completely sprinklered public assembly, educational, institutional or residential building where the system was working properly.

Today, many communities require that a residential fire sprinkler system be installed in all new construction, and when significant changes are made to an existing home. Many more are passing local codes all the time. **Upper Dublin Township is one of the communities that have this requirement.**

Fire safety is something that everyone needs to be aware of 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. **Do not wait until it is too late, practice fire safety every day!** If you have any questions or comments about this article, or any other fire safety subject, please feel free to call the Fire Company at 215-646-2555 or stop into either fire station any Monday night. The Fire Prevention Committee is available to present programs upon request. Visit the Fort Washington Fire Company on the Internet at [www.fortwashingtonfc.org](http://www.fortwashingtonfc.org).

## Firefighters Protect Lives Dedicating Themselves to Their Community

"Protecting you and your family from fire is a tough and highly hazardous job. No community knows when or where fire may break out, bringing with it injury, death, ruin and destruction.

Your first line of defense against catastrophe by fire is your firefighter. He or she is dedicated to public service – to shielding you and yours at the risk of their own life.

Your firefighter trains hard and long to gain the skills demanded by their calling. They work to improve the fire service of your community that means further protection for your loved ones and property. They accept as routine their duty of responding to emergency.

Your firefighter is proud of their calling and their vital role in the life of your community. Be proud of them. Support your firefighter. Help them keep you safe."

Source Unknown