



COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION DIVISION
OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The West Hartford Fire Department is committed to fire prevention and community safety. Reaching out to the people we serve is important because the information we offer may result in a fire being prevented.

With many people spending more time at home, specifically outside, fire pits have been one of the most desired backyard features for a place to relax and even safely socialize. Fire pits are enjoyable, but they also come with great responsibility. The West Hartford Fire Department wants to remind you that following safety protocols will be the best way to reduce the risk of an out of control fire. We also recognize that being neighborly is an obligation that rests on each of us as well.

The majority of accidents occur because of how the fire is built. The fuel must be appropriate for the fire pit that you use. Wood, propane, and natural gas are all acceptable, but under no circumstance should anyone use other fuels to accelerate a fire. Using the right fuel keeps the flames controllable and decreases the risk of flare ups and excessive smoke. Using a mesh cover controls flying sparks. Neither you nor your neighbor would want these conditions on yours or the surrounding properties.

Placement of your fire pit is also a critical factor that must be considered. It should be located 10 feet away from you and your neighbor's house, deck, or fence and 3 feet away from furniture, children, and pets. Because fire pits can radiate a lot of heat, the closer you are to anything combustible, the more likely you'll experience melting, scorching, or even an unintentional fire. What we *do* want nearby is at least 2 gallons of water or a fire extinguisher. If you're out of reach of a hose, your fire extinguisher shouldn't be expired but should be readily available and in good working condition.

Lastly, we encourage everyone to continue to be a good neighbor. Please exercise common courtesy when lighting your fire pit by not burning too close to your neighbor's property and avoid burning on windy days. As a reminder, when the Fire Department receives a complaint, an Open Burning Official will respond and determine how to proceed in rectifying the situation. A potential remedy may come in the form of having your fire put out as we do have the authority to extinguish it if it's a nuisance or appears to a hazard. That can be avoided by being safe and being courteous - which will make your fire pit easier to enjoy.

Thank you for joining us in our effort to keep our community safe through fire prevention.

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