

To: Borough Council

From: Michael Ciocco, Fire Marshal

Subject: Year in review report (2021)

Date: January 2, 2022

In accordance with Chester Heights Fire Code #153, section 106.1 the Fire Marshal shall render a report to Borough Council on or before the February meeting of each year. This report contains a record of all proceedings under the Fire Code during the preceding year.

As Fire Marshal, dealing with the Covid-19 virus and its variants this past year was extremely difficult. Our network of communication with the residents and businesses of Chester Heights has lost the personal touch. It has become extremely difficult to meet face to face. Phone calls and emails go unanswered or lost in the digital world.

I continue to work with Homeowner's organizations at Darlington Woods, Village of Valleybrook, Rolling Heights Estates, Madison Apartments, Merrill Gardens Elder Care and living quarters and the Hollow @ Fox Valley. I have worked with the Fire Chief coordinating drills to familiarize the fire company with new buildings and locations. For 2022 I will continue to author articles for our newsletter with fire safety tips for in and around the home. This year's Fire Prevention campaign, "Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety!" works to educate everyone about the different sounds the smoke and carbon monoxide alarms make. Knowing what to do when an alarm sounds will keep you and your family safe. When an alarm makes noises – a beeping sound or a chirping sound – you must act.

In a fire, mere seconds can mean the difference between a safe escape and a tragedy. Fire safety education isn't just for school children. Teenagers, adults, and the elderly are also at risk in fires, making it important for every member of the community to take some time to make sure they understand how to stay safe in case of a fire.

The response of the public's willingness to adopt Fire Safety in their daily lives is always a challenge. There were sixty-four (64) incidents this year. This is up from fifty-five (55) last year. This was an 8.5 % increase in incidents. Analysis of investigations revealed AFA's (automatic fire alarms), storms, workmen and faulty devices. Pathways was one location with an increase in false alarms. These AFA activations were attributed to smoking in bedrooms.

Budgetary guidelines were met this year. The main expenditures were dues to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and reference books.

***Review of Fiscal 2022 foresees some additional expenses or disbursements for the Fire Marshal's office. These expenses are earmarked for Fire Safety Public Awareness, office supplies, dues, and subscriptions. A total of \$1000.00 is requested for FY 2022.***

The latest Fire Statistics are as follows:

1. Forty-Nine percent (49%) of home fires start in the kitchen. The main reason is unattended cooking. Thanksgiving was the peak day for home cooking fires, followed by Christmas Day and Christmas Eve. Do not leave the stovetop unattended.
2. Fifteen (15%) of home fires are attributed to heating. This includes main house heaters, fireplaces, and space heaters. Never use your gas-powered range or oven to heat your home.
3. Ten percent (10%) of home fires were credited to electrical. These include electrical outlets, small appliances, and lighting fixtures. Plugs should fit the electrical outlet snugly, if loose have outlet renewed.
4. Five percent (5%) of home fires are charged to smoking. These include cigarettes, cigars, and inhaling devices.
5. Two (2%) of home fires resulted from candle burning. The Bedroom is the area most associated with candle burning. If you are burning candles, keep them in sight. Extinguish all candles before bed, leaving the room or house. Residents should consider using battery operated candles to avoid a potential of fire.

Throughout the year, I have worked closely with the Chester Heights Fire Company. A close relationship with the Fire Chief provides quick and concise communication. I have arranged and coordinated all pre inspections of new commercial buildings. Familiarization of properties becomes incalculable when incidents arise.

Chester Heights has become a safer community under the tutelage of our Emergency Manager, Fire Chiefs, Building inspectors and Fire Marshal.

### **Mission Statement**

The Chester Heights Fire Marshal's Office is committed to protecting the safety of Chester Heights' residents and their property, through fire prevention, education, codes enforcement, regulations, and law enforcement.