



Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS



www.tnfd.org

Week of 12/7/07

Phone: 286-4781

Vision

SAFETY

PROFESSIONALISM

**CUSTOMER
SERVICE**

Mission

DELIVER:

EFFICIENT,

PROFESSIONAL,

HIGH QUALITY,

COST EFFECTIVE,

AND TIMELY

**FIRE
SUPPRESSION,**

RESCUE,

**EMERGENCY
MEDICAL
SERVICES,**

FIRE PREVENTION,

**PUBLIC SAFETY
EDUCATION, AND**

**CODE
ENFORCEMENT.**

Chief Carrier's e-mail:
21C1@metrocast.net

Heating Season in Full Swing

As we all know, heating season is definitely in full swing. We have already begun to experience some of the effects of cold weather, a tightening economy, and high fuel costs: chimney fires, partition fires, and Carbon Monoxide incidents. What is important is that we are aware of how these factors can play a role during our incidents.

First and foremost is that no chimney fire is typical. Chimneys and the appliances they serve come in all different sizes and shapes and present a number of challenges for us. Furthermore, they carry flu gases from different fuels at different temperatures and are made of different material. Again, no two are alike.

When we respond to a chimney fire we must first confirm that there is a fire. If it is in fact in the chimney, we must assure that it isn't extending to the exposure—partitions, structural members, or other combustibles. At the same time, we should be trying to limit the original heat source by closing dampers and/or removing burning materials.

After confirming there is no extension, then the decision must be made as to how to extinguish the fire in the chimney. Sometimes it is as simple as removing the fuel or knocking down the burning creosote with a chain. If the



Alan MacRae/for the Citizen Steam rises from the chimney and driveway of a home on High Street in Tilton Sunday evening after a chimney fire extended into the ceiling. The steam in the driveway was caused by the contents of a woodstove which was carried out by firefighters.

Chief's Message

Crunch Time!

Well, it's down to crunch time for a number of us! Put your own spin on that... Christmas shopping, end of the year, inventories. You name it!

For me, it certainly means Christmas shopping(!) but it also means the end of the annual budget, the finalizing of next year's budget, the holidays, and preparing for school vacation. It is a crazy time of year. That is as close as I can get for not having put out a newsletter since the end of October! Can you believe it!? Oh yeah, I forgot that I had to take my EMT refresher test last night, too! Aren't those great? We had the best time!!!!

So really, it is all about crunching time. I think we all need to step back and take reality checks from time to time, but we certainly do at this time of year. Burn out is easy to come by, it seems. Everybody is running

around trying to make someone else happy and often-times they forget about themselves.

Does anyone need a vacation?!

The holidays almost always force us to slow down. Most of us will enjoy our families and a few days of rest. Don't forget those that are not as fortunate.

I have 2 events (actually, now it is 3) coming up next week that have become very important to me at the holidays. The first is the NH Association of Fire Chiefs annual visit to Crooked Mountain Rehabilitation Center in Greenville. Crooked Mountain cares for people who have been effected by brain injuries or illnesses. Many of the clients are children, although they care for all ages.

The fire chiefs arrive mid afternoon and help the clients begin their holiday season by assisting with the Center's Christmas pageant. After the pageant and dinner, we deliver gifts to all

of the clients in all of the floors and wings of the main building as well as all of the group homes. For me, this is one of those "can't miss" events.

The other event is helping Commissioner Gallant's cause by assisting with the distribution of food and gift baskets throughout the community for the TNS Christmas Fund. It is nice to be able to give back to the community and it is extra nice to see the appreciation the people receiving the items show.

New this year will be answering some phones at the auction in Laconia....

Anyway, please give this season in any way you can. There are a lot of people that need it, even those that are closest to you. Be a good friend, spouse, parent, etc.

I'm off to a meeting—have to cut it short. I'll see you all soon, I'm sure!



UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

December 8, 2007	1900	Christmas Party Firefighters Association Olive Branch, Main Street
December 10, 2007	0900 hrs	They All Fall Down Chief Carrier Center Street
December *10*, 2007	1800 hrs	Soft Tissue/Muscoskeletal Emerg. David Rivers Center Street
December 11, 2007	0900 hrs	They All Fall Down Chief Carrier Center Street
December 12, 2007	0900 hrs	They All Fall Down Chief Carrier Center Street
December 17, 2007	0900 hrs	Hosebed Knowledge Chief Carrier Center Street
December 17, 2007	1730 hrs	Training Committee Meeting Chief Carrier Center Street
December 17, 2007	1800 hrs	Officer's Meeting / Training Chief Carrier Center Street
December 18, 2007	0900 hrs	Hosebed Knowledge Chief Carrier Center Street

flue is too hot or the creosote can't be easily removed, we may have to use the chimney nozzle to cool and extinguish the fire.

Many times the mere mention of a water producing device being used on a chimney fire strikes fear in the hearts of some of our firefighters and in the homeowner. But, there are a couple of things to remember about the process: The chimney nozzle flows a very small amount of water through 8 oil burner jets which creates a fine mist. The mist turns to steam and extinguishes the fire. Another point is that during most chimney fires, the clay tile liner will crack from the heat of the chimney fire alone, regardless of water or steam being introduced. If you don't believe me, take a liner and set it on a solid surface, put some fuel (newspapers, etc.) inside of it and light it. Stand back a little and watch what happens. It will crack. The only reason we don't have complete failures of existing chimneys is that the outside of the chimney offers some support to the liners!

In any case we will have to clean out the bottom of the chimney. This may be a clean out or it may be a fireplace. If it is a fireplace, remember to reach up in and get all of the debris off the smoke shelf.

Some other things to remember:

- ◆ Use the thermal imager. Remember the image is relative. Of course the chimney is hot! You should be looking for unusual patterns or moving heat. And also use your senses to back up an unsure image. Does what you see make sense? Usually, it is best to start at the top and work your way back down. Attic access may be difficult at times.
- ◆ Be sure to deploy salvage covers and runners to protect the home. We do not want to create the only damage of the incident by tracking snow, mud, and ash through someone's home.
- ◆ Vent if necessary. Use fans, buckets with covers, and open windows as necessary.
- ◆ Conduct safe and efficient roof operations. Wear SCBA. You are operating above a fire. Work off an aerial when possible and always off a roof ladder. Avoid laddering chimneys with ground ladders—they are usually unstable.
- ◆ Talk with the homeowner after the fire is extinguished to discuss the incident. Identify any hazards noted on a Hazard Notice form and review it so that the homeowner has complete understanding of the hazards and how to resolve them. In a recent incident we found a 30 lb. propane cylinder with a radiant heater on top in a living room. The same home had only 1 smoke detector and it was installed in a poor location. These are examples that can be easily fixed and are dangerous enough that they should be fixed immediately. Imagine stretching a line into a burning living room where there was a 30 lb propane cylinder?!
- ◆ Get back into service. Clean all equipment used. Wash up and wash your gear if necessary. Most of all... get ready for the next one!

We used to have a lot of chimney fires. We still have fires caused by heating units, but wood burning and the use of alternative fuels, besides home heating oil, is more prevalent this year than in the recent past. Look at the wood piles and look at the chimneys. More people are burning and a lot of the wood doesn't look very "seasoned". Couple this with the fact that some people have started using appliances and chimneys that haven't been used in years, and we tend to have more incidents.

Although chimney fires can lead to more serious fires involving the structure, we usually can approach them with a more laid-back, but cautious attitude. This is an opportunity for us to take care of business professionally and safely while offering learning experience to some of our newer personnel as well as the occupants. We should be taking our time, taking care of business, and ensuring that we do not have to return.

Stay warm!