



Brazos County Precinct 3 Volunteer Fire Department

December 2005 Newsletter

Brazos County Precinct 3 Online

Did you know we have a website? It's located at www.pct3vfd.com

The site contains a lot of useful information including:

- Information on our response district (including map)
- Recent department newsletters
- Links to other agencies
- A photo gallery
- Department contact information
- Burn Ban Status

Brazos County Burn Ban

Please remember that outdoor burning is not permitted during a burn ban.

Unfortunately, colder weather does not alleviate the extreme fire danger posed by outdoor burning during drought. Call 979-361-3888 to check burn ban status or to report your controlled burn.

Precinct 3 Purchases New Protective Gear

The Precinct 3 Volunteer Fire Department recently purchased 10 sets of structural firefighting bunker gear and 20 pairs of wildland firefighting coveralls. Structural Firefighting gear is worn to protect firefighters from extreme heat and sharp edges encountered during a wide variety of emergency situations, including structural fires, vehicle fires, and oil well fires. Wild land firefighting coveralls are designed to be worn during grass or brush fires. These coveralls are lighter weight and more maneuverable than the structural firefighting gear.

Fall Festival Cancelled

The members of Precinct 3 regret to inform you the annual Fall Festival has been cancelled for this year. We know many of you were looking forward to this annual event and sincerely apologize for not being able to hold this event.

2005 Department Statistics:

We currently have 39 active members in our department, of whom 21 are qualified Structural Firefighters and 13 are qualified Medical First Responders.

As of October 31st, we have responded to 173 Fire calls and 110 Medical calls in 2005.

2005 Hurricane Response

The 2005 Hurricane season has obviously been a busy and devastating time for those on the gulf coast, as well as for many inland residents. Brazos County Precinct Three Volunteers have been busy since late August assisting with response to these disasters.

Prior to and during hurricane Rita's landfall, Precinct 3 volunteers staffed fire stations and trucks around the clock, assisted Emergency Management with unloading and distributing shelter supplies, worked at the Emergency Operations Center, and prepared to shelter coastal EMS units. Volunteers from the Twin Oaks Power rescue team, and members of our community assisted Precinct 3 in these efforts.

On September 28th, in Rita's aftermath, Precinct 3 responded to a request for mutual aid to Orange County, TX. Firefighters Greg Cross and Nick Hickson were dispatched with a truck to assist local Firefighters overwhelmed by the disaster. After assisting on a wide variety of emergencies, from gas leaks to structure fires, they returned to Brazos County on September 30th.

In early September with the help of the Bryan Salvation Army and generous community members, Precinct 3 volunteers provided time, money, and supplies directly to hurricane Katrina relief efforts on the Mississippi gulf coast.

Finally, Precinct 3 welcomes Firefighter Hank Salzman home from his FEMA deployment to provide disaster assistance in the south and midwest.

Thank you and Happy Holidays to all emergency responders, businesses, and community members who have answered the call this year.

A Season for Sharing in Fire Safety

Each year fires occurring during the holiday season injure 2,600 individuals and cause over \$930 million in damage. There are simple lifesaving steps you can take to ensure a safe and happy holiday. By following some of the outlined precautionary tips, individuals can greatly reduce their chances of becoming a holiday fire casualty.

Preventing Holiday Tree Fires

- **Selecting a Tree for the Holiday**

Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needle should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on

the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard.

- **Caring for Your Tree**
Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.
- **Disposing of Your Tree**
Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pickup service.

Holiday Lights

- **Maintain Your Holiday Lights**
Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.
- **Do Not Overload Electrical Outlets**
Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires - they should not be warm to the touch.
- **Do Not Leave Holiday Lights on Unattended**

Holiday Decorations

- **Use Only Nonflammable Decorations**
All decorations should be nonflammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents.
- **Never Put Wrapping Paper in a Fireplace**
It can throw off dangerous sparks and produce a chemical buildup in the home that could cause an explosion.
- **Artificial Holiday Trees**
If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

Finally, as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, test them monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help, and remember to practice your home escape plan. (Source: US Fire Administration)