

March 2023 Edition

THE SIREN



West Des Moines Fire Department Newsletter

318 5th St. (515) 222-3420 - wdm.iowa.gov/government/fire-department

Message from the Fire Marshal

Spring is rapidly approaching, and the entire Des Moines metro area has been inundated with participants and visitors who are in town for the State Wrestling Tournament, Girls State Basketball Tournament and Boys State Basketball Tournament. These events bring tens of thousands of people to our community each year, and many of them visit Jordan Creek Town Center, the entertainment districts around Jordan Creek, eat at our restaurants and stay in our hotels in West Des Moines. Soon, the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament will pass through Des Moines bringing teams and thousands of their fans with them. In addition, the MidAmerican Energy Company RecPlex continues to host numerous large events at their beautiful facility.

It's an exciting time of year, and the West Des Moines Fire Department has been busy conducting annual life safety inspections throughout our city to help ensure our citizens and guests are safe. We are very fortunate to live in a vibrant and growing community that continues to see large conventions and sports tournaments choose us for their events. Whether you are a resident of West Des Moines, or visiting us for an event, I want to welcome you and thank you for your support of our community and firefighters! It's an honor to serve you!

Mike Whitsell, Fire Marshal



2023
Total Incident
Count
771

<u>February Incident Count - 376</u>	
Rescue & Medical – 212	Service Call – 14
Fire Alarm – 70	Hazardous Condition – 21
Good Intent – 47	Overpressure/Rupture – 4
Fire – 7	Other – 1
Total Estimated Dollar Loss - \$17,000	
Total Estimated Dollar Saved - \$727,700	

Significant Incident Recap



February 18 - Residential Fire

The West Des Moines Fire Department was dispatched to Hillside Avenue for a structure fire around 1:18 p.m. Crews responded with an update of a cooking fire spreading to the microwave and cabinets above the stove. Firefighters arrived to find smoke showing from an open door. They extinguish the fire on the stove, cabinets, and microwave. Ventilation was started to clear out any residual smoke, and it was confirmed that there was not any fire extension behind the walls. The cause of the fire is due to cooking and damages are estimated at \$2,500.

For the Community



2023 Lt. Eric Hosette Memorial Scholarship Award Winner

Congratulations to Captain Josh Schut for being chosen as the 2023 recipient of this award. He was chosen from applicants from across the state of Iowa and stood out with his commitment to the betterment of others by being co-chair of a local community event as well as serving as a board member on the St. Florian Burn Foundation. He also volunteers for a burn survivor camp at Camp Foster, Lake Okoboji. Congratulations, Captain Schut!

Guns N Hoses Charity Hockey Game

Several of our West Des Moines Firefighters participated in the 18th annual Guns N Hoses Charity Hockey Game benefiting Easterseals Iowa & Camp Sunnyside. Local firefighters and police officers battled on the ice for the coveted Pederson-Wissink Memorial Cup. With a 6-3 win, the Guns will be the keeper of the trophy for another year.



Montessori Children's House

Firefighters made a visit to the children at the Montessori Children's House. The children loved learning about fire safety and the firefighters.

Valley High School Health Science Career Day

Captain Dolbeer and Fire Prevention Officer Kinkade attended the Health Science Career Day at Valley High School. They shared information with students interested in learning more about different positions in the fire service. Students also got to feel what full bunker gear and an air pack feels like to wear.



Search and Rescue Training

Training last month was search and rescue drills simulating residential structures and large area structures. The goal of these drills is to locate, stabilize and remove individuals in distress. The purpose of our training is to ensure that we can provide the very best service possible to our community. We accomplish this by doing consistent, relevant, and quality training with our fire crews.





WEST DES MOINES FIRE DEPARTMENT

To strive toward a safer community for our citizens, businesses and visitors

Join Our Team

FULL-TIME FIREFIGHTER



- 18 Years of Age
- High School Diploma or Equivalent
- Valid Driver's License
- Ability to Move Objects in Excess of 100 lbs.
- Starting Annual Salary \$61,123
- Rotating 24 Hour Shift
- Competitive Benefits Package
- Municipal Police and Fire Retirement System
- Career "All-Hazards" Fire Department
- ALS and BLS Medical Response—Non-Transport
- Firefighter I and EMT Certification Preferred

LAST DAY TO APPLY IS MARCH 17, 2023

APPLY AT:

[https://www.wdm.iowa.gov/Home/Components/
JobPosts/Job/1662/1340](https://www.wdm.iowa.gov/Home/Components/JobPosts/Job/1662/1340)

Keeping You Safe

Safety in Places of Public Assembly

When entering a place of public assembly (restaurants, theaters, auditoriums, exhibition halls, nightclubs, etc.) we usually don't anticipate that something unexpected is going to happen. Unfortunately, disasters can occur when you least expect it. With many people gathered in one main space, have you thought about what you would do in an emergency in a place of assembly? It's not always as easy as going out the same way you entered. Read the tips below to learn how to be prepared in a place of public assembly during an emergency.

Before You Enter

- **Take a good look.** Does the building appear to be in a condition that makes you feel comfortable? Is the main entrance wide and does it open outward to allow easy exit? Is the outside area clear of materials stored against the building or blocking exits?
- **Have a communication plan.** Identify a relative or friend to contact in case of emergency and you are separated from family or friends.
- **Plan a meeting place.** Pick a meeting place outside to meet family or friends with whom you are attending the function. If there is an emergency, be sure to meet them there.

When You Enter

- **Take a good look.** Locate exits immediately when you enter a building. You should look for all available exits. Some exits may be in front and some behind you. Be prepared to use your closest exit. You may not be able to use the main exit.
- **Check for clear exit paths.** Make sure aisles are wide enough and not obstructed by furniture. Check to make sure your exit door is not blocked or chained. If there are not at least two exits or exit paths are blocked, report the violation to management and leave the building if it is not immediately addressed. Call the local fire department to register a complaint.
- **Do you feel safe?** Does the building appear to be overcrowded? Are there fire sources such as candles burning, cigarettes/cigars burning, pyrotechnics, or other heat sources that may make you feel unsafe? Are there safety systems in place such as alternative exits, sprinklers, and smoke alarms? If you do not feel safe in the building, leave immediately.

During an Emergency

- **React Immediately.** If an alarm sounds, you see smoke or fire, or some other unusual disturbance, stay calm and immediately exit the building in an orderly fashion.
- **Get Out, Stay Out.** Once you have escaped, stay out. Under no circumstances should you ever go back into a burning building. Let trained firefighters conduct rescue operations.



Learning From Tragic Fires

A fire at [The Station nightclub](#) in W. Warwick, RI, on February 20, 2003, claimed 100 lives and is one of deadliest nightclub fires in U.S. history. Since that fire, NFPA has enacted tough new code changes for fire sprinklers and crowd management in nightclub type venues. Those requirements mark important changes to the codes and standards governing safety in assembly occupancies.

This Month in Fire History

New London School Explosion

The New London School Explosion took place in 1937 in New London, Texas, as the result of an undetected natural gas leak. The gas accumulated in a crawl space under the school and filtered through the building until it contacted an electrical source, igniting an explosion that collapsed the structure. Estimated fatalities range from 296-319, making it the worst school disaster in U.S. history.

Natural gas is difficult to detect because it is invisible and odorless. Had the leak been discovered soon after it began, the explosion could have been prevented. For this reason, Texas mandated adding mercaptans to natural gas to make it odorous and make leaks detectable. This soon became standard practice worldwide.



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