**Chapter 27: Fire Prevention and Public Education**

**Chief Concepts**

* Fire prevention is as important as fire suppression. Countless fires could be prevented by teaching safe behaviours and eliminating unsafe conditions. This kind of education ultimately saves lives and reduces the losses caused by fires.
* Fire prevention includes a range of activities that are intended to prevent the outbreak of fires and to limit the consequences if a fire does occur. These activities include enacting and enforcing fire codes, conducting property inspections, and presenting public fire-safety education programs.
* Your highest priority as a fire fighter should always be to prevent fires. Although Fire Fighter I and Fire Fighter II personnel may have limited responsibilities for formal fire prevention activities, it is imperative that you understand the objectives of fire prevention, the delineation of fire prevention responsibilities within your department, and the importance of your role in fire prevention.
* Fire codes are enacted to ensure a minimum level of fire safety in the home and workplace environments. After a jurisdiction adopts a fire code, it must be able to enforce it. Regular inspections ensure compliance, note any violations, and require their correction.
* Public education teaches techniques to reduce the risks of death or injury in the event of fire.
* Public fire and life safety education programs include those focused on the following topics:
  + Stop, Drop, and Roll program
  + Exit Drills in the Home (EDITH) program
  + Installation and maintenance of smoke alarms
  + Advantages of residential sprinkler systems
  + Selection and use of portable fire extinguishers
  + Learn Not to Burn ®
  + Change Your Clock–Change Your Battery
  + Fire safety for special populations
  + Bike safety
  + Fall prevention
  + Wildland fire prevention programs
* The Stop, Drop, and Roll program is designed to instruct people what to do if their clothing catches fire.
  + **Stop** means just that: stay in place; do not run. Stress the fact that running will fan the flames and spread the fire.
  + **Drop** means getting down on the ground or on the floor. Cover the face with the hands to help protect the airway and the eyes.
  + **Roll** involves tucking in the elbows and keeping the legs together while rolling like a bug. Individuals should then roll over and over, and then roll back in the other direction; this helps to smother the flames.
* EDITH teaches residents how to safely get out of their homes in the event of a fire or other emergency.
* Another type of public fire-safety presentation covers the proper installation and maintenance of smoke alarms. In discussing this topic, stress the importance of having a working smoke alarm on every floor of a house. Also stress the importance of keeping smoke alarms in good working order.
* Many fire departments offer to conduct fire safety surveys in private dwellings. A home fire-safety survey helps identify fire and life-safety hazards and provides occupants with recommendations on making their home safer.
* During a home fire-safety survey, consider several types of hazards and issues. Concentrate on the hazard categories that most often cause residential fires, such as cooking equipment, heating equipment, electrical wiring, smoking materials, candles and other open flames, and children playing with fire.
* Most fire departments have a set format for conducting fire station tours; for example, a tour might start with an inspection of the apparatus and end in a meeting room with a question-and-answer session and information about the department and fire prevention techniques.
* Try to leave every tour group with both a fire prevention message and materials.