



Take time to prepare for home fires

Fires this winter have been devastating and frequent. The recent fire in Wayne is just one of many in New Jersey this year that have caused injury and homelessness. Since the start of this year, there have been 35 large, tragic, U.S.-based fires involving multiple deaths and injuries, with fatalities on the rise.

A total of 134 people, 80 of them children, have died from those 35 fires.

The increase in residential fires every winter can be attributed directly to the increased use of space heaters, fireplaces and candles. Prevent fires by leaving 3 feet of clear space around space heaters at all times.

Do not leave them unattended. Do not leave open flames unattended, such as gas stoves and candles, and keep them free from debris. Replace batteries in smoke detectors and make sure they are working properly.

As soon as you come in contact with a fire, immediately call your local fire department. Do not, under any circumstances, attempt to put the fire out on your own.

Homeowners and building owners rarely believe that a fire will happen to them and do not take time to prepare or consider fire safety. Fire rates in New Jersey and across the country are rising steadily, making fire a very real and present issue in all our lives. We as a society need to be more diligent and act now to protect ourselves from fire, using fire prevention methods and technologies that are easily available, before a fire occurs and lives are lost.

Vincent Fichera, executive director, New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board

