

Dear Membership,

The horrific tragedy in Brooklyn has become a catalyst for renewed interest for fire safety. As many of us embark on our annual Pesach cleaning over the coming week, please use this as an opportunity to also check your home for the following fire safety risks.

Smoke and CO Alarms

It is critical that you not only have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, but that they are correctly placed throughout your home. Working smoke alarms serve as an early warning system, and because your sense of smell shuts down when you are sleeping, they may be your only warning at night. ***Roughly 3 out of every 5 fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or the alarms are not working.*** Safety tip sheets, available from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), can assist you in ensuring you have proper placement of smoke and CO detectors in your home. These can be found both at the shul and at: <http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/safety-tip-sheets>. ~~Please contact me if you need assistance with installing detectors in your home.~~

Candles

Keep candles in a sturdy holder on a level non-combustible surface and out of the reach of children or pets. More than half of all home candle fires occurred when some form of combustible material was too close to the candle. ***Keep candles at least 12 inches from anything that can burn and at least four feet away from curtains, draperies, blinds and kitchen cabinets.*** Secure hair and clothing, such as sleeves or aprons, from the flame when handling candles. Use particular care when searching for chometz (bedikas chometz), keeping candles away from bedding, tablecloths, clothing or anything that can burn. Use a flashlight for hard-to-reach places.

Shabbos/Yom-Tov Appliances

:Make sure your home has ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) in the kitchen and test these on a monthly basis. Replace or repair damaged or loose electrical cords. ***Only plug one heat-producing appliance (crock-pot, warming tray, water kettle) into an outlet at any time.*** As halacha permit, attach your appliance to a Timer so that it is not on while you are asleep or away from the house. Position your blech so heat can escape from all sides without heating walls, cabinets and counters. Do not cover plastic components on your appliances with aluminum foil as this may cause them to melt. If preparing your oven/range for Pesach, make sure ***not*** to cover oven vents with aluminum foil. Additional Fire Safety tips can be found at <http://www.jewishfireprevention.org>

The Teaneck Fire Prevention Bureau allows residents to request a free inspection of their home to determine whether fire hazards exist. A fire prevention specialist will make a comprehensive examination of the resident's home or apartment and prepare a list of recommendations for changes that will greatly reduce the possibility of fire. Notice is required for an inspection appointment due to the large volume of requests. Contact the Teaneck Fire Prevention Bureau at: 201-808-8080 extension 5206.

Finally, many parents, rabbis, and educators are struggling to find the words to talk to children about last weekend's tragic fire in Midwood. The professionals of Project CHAI, Chai Lifeline's crisis and intervention department, have put together some suggestions that can be viewed at: <http://www.chailifeline.org/press/83/Flatbush-Fire-Tragedy>