

PUBLIC SAFETY

Assistant Fire Chief Fuller Retires

Mark Sitarz, Fire Chief

After 27 years of service, we extend our best wishes and thanks to Chris Fuller as he retires from the St. Anthony Fire Department.

Chris grew up on a farm in Lanesboro, later moving to northeast Minneapolis and working at the University of Minnesota as an elevator repair technician. He was interested in becoming a firefighter, and joined the St. Anthony Fire Department as a paid on-call firefighter in 1995 while working for the U of M.

In 1999, he became a full-time firefighter and served as a Captain and Training Officer prior to his current role as Assistant Chief and Fire Marshal. He currently also serves on the Board of Directors for the Fire Marshals Association of Minnesota.



Chris received a Commendation of Meritorious Conduct from the city in 2003 for rescuing the driver of a vehicle that was submerged in a holding pond, and was recognized with the Curtis M. "Bud" Holter Fire Instructor of the Year Award for the State of Minnesota in 2012.

During his career, Chris made a major impact in the community through CPR training. He estimates he has taught over 10,000 people on CPR or Hands-Only CPR, including over 3,000 students.

Notably, you might recognize Chris from his time wearing a certain red suit and beard atop a fire engine making its way through the city every year in December!

From saving lives to being an integral part of day-to-day operations, Chris's impact has been significant throughout the department and within the community.

Chris, you've worked extremely hard over the years, and we hope you enjoy your time with your family and the jewel of your eye, your granddaughter. ■

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Fire Safety Statistics and Prevention

Mattie Jaros, Fire Captain

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recently published their findings in the 2021 Report on Fire Safety in the United States. This report highlights data showing successes and weaknesses in fire prevention measures throughout the country. One of the key takeaways is the shrinking numbers of fires and fire deaths. The report attributes this to the progress that has been made in the use of smoke alarms, as mandated by fire and building codes, as well as continued public education about their significance. Some other key findings are:

- Cooking remains the leading cause of home fires and injuries
- Fire deaths of children under five have dramatically declined, but little change has occurred in fire death tolls of older adults
- Smoking has been the leading cause of home fire deaths for roughly four decades

The St. Anthony Fire Department strives to educate the public with various fire prevention messages throughout the year. Our fire prevention program in the schools allows us to visit each grade and teach safety lessons that are relative to each cognitive level. This program is key in our work to reduce fire related injury and death statistics.



As we look at the highlights from the NFPA report, it recognizes the lack of decline in fire deaths that occur within the older adult population. We have implemented several programs geared toward reducing this risk in our own community, the first being talks with our senior population through classes for seniors on fire and life safety. Second is our home safety survey, which is a free program for any resident. We check all smoke alarms in the household and spend time discussing safety topics and emergency preparations within the home. If you are interested in any of the prevention classes the Fire Department offers, please contact us at 612-782-3400. ■



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