

## **SAFEGUARD YOUR ENVIRONMENT AGAINST FIRES DURING WINTER MONTHS.**

### **1. Safety at home**

- Electrical wires must be installed by a qualified electrician. No electrical wires may run under carpets.
- Unplug electrical appliances if they are going to be left unattended for a long period.
- Switch off geysers and stoves at the main switch if you are going to be away from home for a long period.
- Use heaters with great caution and unplug them before you go to sleep or leave the area where they are used.
- Heaters should not be used to dry clothes and must be positioned away from any flammable material when switched on.
- Switch off electrical blankets at the wall plug when you go to sleep and unplug them if you leave the house.
- If a power failure occurs in your area, turn off all appliances.
- Make sure that the pipes and connections of gas appliances are in good working order before you ignite the appliance.
- Gas cylinders must be kept in a well-ventilated area, preferably separate and on its own.
- Fireplaces should be used with great caution and under adult supervision only. Always make sure that the fire is put out before you go to sleep.
- Children must use candles under adult supervision only.
- Keep matches and lighters away from children.
- Flammable liquids must be stored in a cool, ventilated area to avoid explosions.
- Cover unattended swimming pools with a safety net in order to prevent drownings.
- Avoid unnecessary waste or compost heaps if your home will be left unattended for a long period.
- Owners of smallholdings must have firebreaks around their property and large open areas in order to minimise the risk of fires spreading if they occur.
- Extinguish any open fire before you leave an area.
- Report grass fires immediately. No person is allowed to set fire to grass. Remember, arson is a criminal offence.
- Make sure that emergency numbers are easily accessible in case of any emergency.
- It is a good idea for households to practice escape drills so that everyone is well prepared in case of emergencies.

### **2. What to do if you are the first person on an accident scene**

- Always approach any hazardous scene with great caution.

- If you stop at an accident scene, make sure your car is safely parked with the hazard lights on to avoid further accidents or obstructions to other road users. Try to stop past the scene if possible.
- Call the emergency services immediately if you arrive at an accident scene first.
- Never move patients unless their lives are in danger, for example if the car they are in is on fire or if there are obstacles that could fall on them and cause further injuries or death.
- Assess whether the patient is breathing.
- Keep patients calm by talking to them and informing them that help is on the way.
- If you see any severe bleeding, try to stop or minimise it by applying direct pressure to the wound. Avoid direct contact with any blood as you may be exposing yourself to contagious diseases.
- If the patient's airway is constricted, open his airway by tilting his head backwards if possible.
- When the emergency services arrive at the scene, inform the officer in charge of any actions you have taken to assist the patient. Stand behind the barrier tape so that the highly trained emergency services staff can do their job. If they need any help from you as a bystander, you will be asked to assist.
- If you witnessed an accident, make sure to report it to the South African Police Service (SAPS).
- Never remove or destroy any evidence that might help the SAPS or other officials.

### **3. Reporting emergencies**

- It is important to remain calm in any emergency.
- Make sure you report an emergency as soon as possible.
- All details given during the emergency call must be correct. For example, how many patients there are and whether they are still breathing or not; whether something is burning and what material it is; and how many vehicles are involved.
- You will be asked to give the exact address and nearest cross-streets, as well as the suburb of the scene.
- Make sure you give the correct telephone number where the control centre can phone you back to confirm the call or to get more information if needed.
- Never make any prank calls to the emergency services.

### **4. Ambulance emergency calls**

- Emergency services will only respond to emergency situations such as heart attacks, stab wounds, gunshots, breathing difficulties, difficult labors and trauma situations.
- Emergency number to be called 10177 (Toll free)

- For minor injuries and ailments, patients must make use of their own transport or a private ambulance service. You may ask emergency services to provide you with the telephone numbers of private ambulance services or to send them out to a sick or injured patient.
- In an emergency situation, one minute may feel like ten. However, the responding station will send out an ambulance the moment the call is given through to them.
- It is important for the call taker to know if patient is breathing or not and has a heart beat and skin colour.
- The first three minutes of any emergency are the most crucial.
- The operator may provide you with vital information that could save the victim's life, for example how to stabilise the patient until emergency staff arrive.
- Sometimes it is difficult for ambulances to find an address, especially at night or if the house doesn't have visible numbers. In such cases, it is advisable that someone stands outside the house with a torch, or that a light inside the house is switched on and off to draw the attention of the ambulance staff, making it easier for them to get to the right house.
- The moment emergency staff arrive on the scene they will ask you for a quick report and then to stand aside. If they need your help, they will ask for it.

## **EMERGENCY NUMBERS**

**310 6300**

**310 6400**