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**Spring Cleaning? Decluttering Your Home Also Reduces Fire Risk!**

March brings with it fresh breezes and days when you can finally open your windows and air out the house, along with the undeniable urge to clean! After a tough winter in mostly shuttered homes, spring-cleaning fever is sweeping the nation! Homeowners are ready to tackle long-awaited chores, both in and out of the home. While doing spring cleaning, you can use the opportunity to reduce your family’s fire risk at the same time.

Have the urge to start throwing things out or recycling them? Good idea! Reducing clutter also helps reduce your fire risk. Although clutter may not start fires, it does act as fuel for a fire. If you aren’t using it, get rid of it! This goes for old appliances, clothing, leftover wood from do-it-yourself projects, magazines and newspapers, old paint cans and anything else you have lying around that remains untouched for months at a time.

It takes just one spark to start a blaze with these highly flammable materials. Get rid of them! Your home will look more spacious and you’ll be reducing your family’s risk of a home fire.

Outdoors, it’s a good idea to remove any rubbish, twigs or leaves that may have gathered around the foundation of your home during the winter months. Trim bushes, plants and trees. Removing unwanted vegetation clears fuel for any potential fire and improves the appearance of your property. Keep gutters and roofs clear of leaves and other buildup.

Remember, anything that can catch fire can start a fire. There’s no better time than during spring cleaning to recognize the dangers in your home and dispose of them. You’ll not only enjoy a breath of fresh air; you’ll also breathe a sigh of relief, knowing you’re doing all you can to keep your home and family safe from fire!

**Insert your Department name** relies on brave men and women to volunteer their time to serve as volunteer firefighters to ensure that every call for help is answered. Men and women with almost every skill set are needed. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, please contact **Insert your Dept name at Insert website** or call **Insert your Dept phone number**.

There are volunteer opportunities at your local volunteer fire department for citizens willing to work hard. To learn more about becoming a volunteer firefighter and joining your local volunteer fire department, please visit [VolunteerFireTN.org](http://www.VolunteerFireTN.org).

***About the Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. (TFCA)****The TFCA provides leadership to career and volunteer Fire Chiefs, Chief Fire Officers and managers of emergency service organizations throughout the State of Tennessee through vision, information, education, service and representation to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities. The TN Fire Chiefs Association (TFCA) also encourages the professional advancement of the fire service to ensure and maintain greater protection of life and property from fire and natural or man-made disasters. The TFCA’s mission is to provide leadership to career and volunteer chiefs, chief fire officers, and managers of Emergency Service Organizations throughout the State of Tennessee through vision, information, education, service and representation to enhance their professionalism and capabilities. More information about the TFCA is located at* [*www.tnfirechiefs.com*](http://www.tnfirechiefs.com) *.*

***About Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS)****The Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association was awarded a SAFER recruitment and retention grant in 2016 and partnered with the International Association of Fire Chiefs to identify recruitment and retention goals, strategies and marketing methodologies that would benefit not only participating departments, but all fire departments in the state. 19 departmental groups, consisting of 64 departments, were selected to participate in Phase I of the program. The VWS program is also operating in Virginia through the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and Connecticut through the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association. There is also currently a National VWS effort focusing on diversity and new trainings. More information about the Tennessee VWS can be found at* [*www.VolunteerFireTN.org*](http://www.VolunteerFireTN.org)*.*

*(Insert info about your department in similar format to above)*