



TOWN OF CANTON VOLUNTEER Fire & EMS Department

Valuing Life...at a Moment's Notice



In Response....

From the Desk of Fire & EMS Chief Rich Hutchings

Town of Canton Volunteer Fire & EMS Department

True Story Canton's volunteer firefighters were 3 ½ hours into a mutual aid call to Burlington, where a large brush fire was forcing the evacuation from homes, when we were dispatched to another brush fire on High Valley Road in Canton. Wind gusts had fanned flames from a backyard camp fire, in a large stone pit, onto a leaf bed, igniting it. From there, the wind was pushing the fire up the hill towards the residence.

I stayed behind with my fire crew to continue to assist Burlington, while our Assistant Fire Chief responded to High Valley with about 12 volunteer firefighters. There are no hydrants in the area of High Valley Road, so we had to bring our own water supply on Engines 3, 4 and 6. The homeowner was raking leaves at the edge of the burning brush, trying to create a breach between the growing fire and his home, as the first fire engine arrived.

In Response to spring ushering in peak brush fire season, the Town of Canton Volunteer Fire & EMS Department asks that you consider ways to diminish the chances that a brush fire will threaten your family, home and/or property. Such as:

Landscaping & Renovations: Choose plants and trees that are less affected by draught conditions; have low leaf oil or resin; and loose, open branches and limbs. Keep trees and shrubs cut low. Consider adding rocks to gardens, walkways, walls and patios. Stones may help create a break in the path of a brush fire. In addition, when using wood products for patios, decks or fencing, be sure they have been treated to be fire-resistant.

Exterior Spring Cleaning: Trees, bushes, brush, dried leaves and even roots running under your property, constitute potential fuel that can burn. You can lower the chances of fire spreading into your home by creating at least a 30 foot buffer-barrier around your residence that is free of all debris, dead brush, limbs and vegetation. Properties on a slope should consider clearing to 100 feet down the hill.

Weather Conditions: Do not burn brush, leaves or even ignite small camp or pit fires on windy or dry days. Wind, which could be blowing away from your property, can reverse itself within seconds. Large brush fires can generate their own wind, making them even more difficult to control.

Prevention: Don't ever discard cigarettes or other flammable objects onto the ground or vegetation. Use secure metal containers instead. Do not burn brush, other debris or trash with a combustible liquid, i.e. gas or other lighting fluid. *In Canton, you must obtain a burn permit to burn brush.* Do not ever leave any fire unattended, even for a second.

Doing your part helps us to protect you and the community we serve. While Connecticut has been largely spared the most devastating fires that are tragically more common out west, we nevertheless drill annually to ensure that we are ready for whatever spring brings.

Until then..... be safe.

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