



# Vigilant Engine & Hook & Ladder Co., Inc.

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An open letter to the Great Neck Community:

After the horrible fire in Brooklyn this past Shabbat we have put together some information to help make your homes safer:

## General Safety:

- Install smoke alarms inside and outside of each bedroom and sleeping area. Make sure you have working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home, including your basement.
- Smoke alarms should be on the ceiling or high up on walls. Keep them at least 10 feet from the stove to cut down on false alarms. Follow manufactures guides on proper placement of carbon monoxide alarms.
- Use interconnected alarms so when one sounds they all sound.
- Test every alarm once per month by pressing the test button.
- When you change your clock, change the battery in your smoke alarm as well as your carbon monoxide alarm.
- Replace all carbon monoxide alarms every five years and all smoke alarms every 10 years.
- Make sure all outlets in your residence are GFCI and inspect all electrical chords periodically for damage.

**Cooking Safety:** The majority of all residential fires start in the kitchen. Most home cooking fires involve the stovetop portion of the range. One-third of these fires result from unattended cooking.

- Turn pot handles inward, facing the wall, to prevent burns caused by overturning or spills.
- Never put water on a grease fire, use an extinguisher and call the Fire Department.
- Have a pot lid and container of baking soda on hand to smother a pan fire. Do not use water.
- Treat burns immediately with cool running water and seek medical attention.
- Designate ovens, stoves, and heat producing appliances as a “No Go” zone for children.
- Position the blech so heat can escape from all sides without heating walls, cabinets, and counters.
- Never put linens of any kind on top of your blech or stovetop.
- Never cover oven vents with aluminum foil.
- Never leave appliances which are turned on unattended and always check all electrical chords for damage.

**Candle Safety:** More than 33% of candle fires occur when candles are left unattended. Half of the people killed by candle fires in the home are younger than 20 years of age, with most of the victims between the ages of five and nine. Burns and fire burns are the leading cause of death in the home for children and young adults.

- Use sturdy candleholders, with flame-protective non-combustible (glass or metal) shades or globes.
- Place candles at least four feet away from curtains, draperies, blinds, kitchen cabinets, and bedding.
- Secure hair and clothing, such as sleeves or aprons, from the flame when handling candles.
- Light candles out of children’s reach and where they cannot be knocked over.
- Never leave candles unattended and keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.
- Use extra caution when lighting yahrzeit candles and keep them on a heat resistant surface away from flammable materials.

## Pesach Safety:

- Do not place candles in paper bags with chometz.
- Keep candles away from all flammable materials. Use a flashlight to search for chometz in hard to reach places.

We highly suggest that each family makes a home escape plan and locate two ways out of every room. Families should have a fixed meeting place outside of the house to be able to account for everyone. If there are infants, older adults, family members with mobility limitations, and/or children who may not wake to the sound of a smoke alarm someone should be assigned to assist them in an emergency. Do not try to fight a fire yourself, get out and stay out. Make sure to close the door behind you (to rooms as well as the front/back door to your house) which will help limit fire spread. Calling 911 will delay Fire Department response in Great Neck so know who provides fire and ambulance service to your house and make sure to know their direct phone number. If you have any questions about which department to call, feel free to email me your address at [jforst@gnfd.org](mailto:jforst@gnfd.org), and I will give you the proper number depending on where you live.

Fondly,  
Joshua Forst  
Chief of Department

