

CONSUMER CONNECTION

A Publication of the MRSPA Consumer Education
Committee

September—October, 2025



Daylight savings time ends at 2 AM on November 2nd. Don't forget to **FALL back!**
This is also a great time to change your smoke and carbon-monoxide batteries. Stay on time and keep your family safe this fall!

**Looking for some great locations for
"leaf-peeping?"**

Visit:

[Take a Maryland Fall Foliage Trip | VisitMaryland.org](#)

Have a happy Fall!!



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CHARGE *into Fire Safety™*

Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home

- **BUY** only listed products.
- **CHARGE** devices safely.
- **RECYCLE** batteries responsibly.



**FIRE
PREVENTION
WEEK™**

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Most of the electronics in our homes — smartphones, tablets, power and lawn tools, laptops, e-cigarettes, headphones, and toys, to name just a few — are powered by lithium-ion batteries. If not used correctly or damaged, they can overheat and start a fire or explode. “Charge into Fire Safety™: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home” provides the information, guidance, and resources needed to use lithium-ion batteries with caution and care.

“Lithium-ion batteries are powerful, convenient, and they’re just about everywhere,” said Lorraine Carli, vice president of Outreach and Advocacy at NFPA. “Making sure the public knows how to handle them safely is critical to minimizing the potential risks they present.”

The three key messages that support “Charge into Fire Safety: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home” include:



BUY only listed products

- When buying a product that uses a lithium-ion battery, take time to research it. Look for a stamp from a nationally recognized testing lab on the packaging and product, which means that it meets established safety standards.
- Many products sold online and in stores may not meet safety standards and could increase the risk of fire.



CHARGE devices safely

- Always use the cables that come with the product to charge it. Also, charge the device in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.
- If you need a new charger, buy one from the manufacturer or one that the manufacturer has approved.
- Charge your device on a hard surface. Don’t charge it under a pillow, on a bed, or on a couch. This could cause a fire.
- Don’t overcharge your device. Unplug it or remove the battery when it’s fully charged.

DISPOSE OF/RECYCLE batteries responsibly

- Don’t throw lithium-ion batteries in the trash or regular recycling bins because they could catch fire.

Recycling your device or battery at a safe battery recycling location is the best way to dispose them. Visit www.call2recycle.org to find a recycling spot near you.

To learn more about Fire Prevention Week and this year’s theme, “**Charge into Fire Safety: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home,**” visit fpw.org.

Fire Prevention Week is celebrated throughout North America every October and is the oldest U.S. public health observance on record. For more than 100 years, Fire Prevention Week has worked to educate people about the risk of home fires and ways to minimize them. Local fire departments, schools, and community organizations play a key role in bringing Fire Prevention Week to life in their communities each year and spreading basic but critical fire safety messages.

National Drug Take-Back Day is Saturday, October 25, 2025. Do your part to dispose of unused and expired medicine by turning it in at a local take-back location near you.

In April, 2025, the efforts below indicate the amazing amount of harmful drugs that were disposed of:

- Total Law Enforcement Participation: **4,472**
- Total Collection Sites: **4,590**
- Total Weight Collected: **620,321 lbs. (310Tons)**

Total Weight All Time: 19,820,761 lbs. (9,910 Tons)



Criminals are using mailboxes to steal checks, cash, and personal information, leaving victims with drained accounts and financial turmoil.

The problem is continuing! Thieves are snatching envelopes from home mailboxes and using stolen keys to access blue U.S. Postal Service collection boxes. Once they have a check, they wash it with bleach to erase the details and re-write it for thousands of dollars, turning a \$50 check into \$5,000 in just moments.



To protect yourself, avoid putting checks in your mailbox with the red flag up. Pay bills online whenever possible. If you must mail a check, drop it off inside your local post office and avoid using blue collection boxes at night or on weekends when thieves often strike. Taking these precautions can save you from months of financial headaches.

-From Rossen Reports

Be Aware of the "Card-declined" Scam!

The Better Business Bureau has received many recent reports from consumers whose credit cards are declined when shopping online. Typically, they try to use another credit card, but that one fails, too.



Scammers are using fake shopping sites to entice customers to use their credit cards. When the card is declined, scammers are actually taking your credit card and using it to make fraudulent purchases. The AAA (American Automobile Association) recently warned consumers that there was a scam, offering a free AAA car emergency repair kit if people took a survey. The catch: You had to pay for shipping. So people entered their credit card info and then received the card-declined message. One victim told AAA that he found several fraudulent charges on his two credit cards.

Always use a credit card rather than a debit card, because credit cards offer stronger fraud protections. If you're shopping online and unfamiliar with the company, research it before making a purchase.

Perhaps, most importantly, if you receive an unsolicited offer, ignore it! Don't click on any links or answer any calls. Those same rules apply to shopping scams, charity scams, job scams—if you didn't ask for it, don't touch it.

Leaves are starting to fall! Make sure they don't cause YOU to fall!

Keep walkways clear of leaves.

Always watch for wet leaves on pavement.

Ask for help to clear gutters of leaves and debris.



Saving money in 2025!!

Great deals to look for in September and October



- \$ Summer clothing**
- \$ Major appliances**
- \$ Patio furniture**
- \$ Bicycles**
- \$ School supplies—after school is in session—
stock up for next year!**
- \$ Cars**
- \$ Costumes**



National Coffee Day is September 29th. Check your local coffee shop for some great deals!

October is national Pizza Month—score some good deals!



It's still Farmer's Market Season! Don't forget to support your local farmers and shop at their stands. Not sure where to shop near you? Check out:

[Buy Local at Maryland Farmers' Markets | VisitMaryland.org](#)

Check out the pumpkins, fall mums and fall veggies!

September is National Suicide Prevention Month



Let's Talk About
Suicide Prevention.

**Share science.
Share hope.**

 **NIH** National Institute of Mental Health

nimh.nih.gov/shareNIMH

Protect Your Physical Health

Improving your physical wellbeing is one of the most comprehensive ways you can support your mental health. You'll have an easier time maintaining good mental habits when your body is a strong, resilient foundation.

- **Exercise daily.** Exercise can take many forms, such as taking the stairs whenever possible, walking up escalators, and running and biking rather than driving. Joining a class may help you commit to a schedule, if that works best for you. Daily exercise naturally produces stress-relieving hormones in your body and improves your overall health.
- **Eat well.** Eating mainly unprocessed foods like whole grains, vegetables and fresh fruit is key to a healthy body. Eating this way can help lower your risk for chronic diseases, and help stabilize your energy levels and mood.
- **Get enough sleep.** Adults generally need between seven and nine hours of sleep. A brief nap—up to 30 minutes—can help you feel alert again during the day. Even 15 minutes of daytime sleep is helpful. To make your nighttime sleep count more, practice good “sleep hygiene,” like avoiding using a computer, TV or smartphone before bed.
- **Avoid alcohol and drugs.** They don't actually reduce stress and often worsen it.
- **Practice relaxation exercises.** Deep breathing, meditation and progressive muscle relaxation are easy, quick ways to reduce stress. When conflicts come up between you and your family member, these tools can help you feel less controlled by turbulent feelings and give you the space you need to think clearly about what to do next.

Dial 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Add this number to your phone now. It could save a life later.

Your Consumer Education Committee Cares About You!

