



Maryland Retired School Personnel Association

CONSUMER CONNECTION

A Publication of the MRSPA Consumer Education Committee

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Did you know that cooking fires are the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries?
Cooking safety starts with YOU.



FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

Pay attention to fire prevention.

2023-2024 MRSPA CONSUMER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

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Tips for Safety in the Kitchen from the National Fire Prevention Association

According to NFPA, cooking is the leading cause of home fires, with nearly half (49 percent) of all home fires involving cooking equipment; cooking is also the leading cause of home fire injuries. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires and related deaths. In addition, NFPA data shows that cooking is the only major cause of fire that resulted in more fires and fire deaths in 2014-2018 than in 1980-1984.

"These numbers tell us that more public awareness is needed around when and where cooking hazards exist, along with ways to prevent them," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of the Outreach and Advocacy at NFPA. "This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign will work to promote tips, guidelines, and recommendations that can help significantly reduce the risk of having a cooking fire."

Following are cooking safety messages that support this year's theme, "**Cooking safety starts with YOU! Pay attention to fire prevention**":

- Always keep a close eye on what you're cooking. For foods with longer cook times, such as those that are simmering or baking, set a timer to help monitor them carefully.
- Clear the cooking area of combustible items and keep anything that can burn, such as dish towels, oven mitts, food packaging, and paper towels out of the area.
- Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove. Keep a lid nearby when cooking. If a small grease fire starts, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner.
- Be aware of children or pets near a cooking area. Keep them safely away!

"Staying in the kitchen, using a timer, and avoiding distractions that remove your focus from what's on the stove are among the key messages for this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign," said Carli.

Halloween is a time for fun and spooky celebrations and activities, but it can also be a time for some truly scary fire safety hazards. As the holiday nears, take simple precautions that can help ensure the holiday remains fun and fire safe:

- Use glow sticks or battery-operated candles for jack-o'-lanterns and other Halloween decorations.
- When choosing costumes, stay away from long trailing fabric.
- Provide children with flashlights to carry for lighting or glow sticks as part of their costume.



DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION

National Prescription Drug **TAKE BACK DAY**

Saturday, October 28th
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Turn in your unused or expired
prescription medication
for safe disposal.



Visit www.dea.gov or call 800-882-9539
for a collection site near you.

It is SO important to do your part to keep our communities safe from dangerous drugs. Please do your part to turn in unused or expired medication. Many police stations and pharmacies take drugs back throughout the year. Thank you for doing your part!!



September is National Preparedness Month

What you can do to be prepared -

- ⇒ Read your insurance policies carefully
- ⇒ Inventory your property...take photos and or videos
- ⇒ Keep your policy and inventory information in a safe or off-site place
- ⇒ Consider purchasing flood insurance. Visit www.floodsmart.gov or call 888-379-9351
- ⇒ Contact the Maryland Insurance Administration for more information at 410-468-2000 or 800-492-6116 also www.insurance.maryland.gov



Helpful hack from Rossen Reports...

There is no power greater than that of the rigid plastic container. We are joking, but only slightly. Rigid plastic cases are the bane of parents around the world, especially when Christmas rolls around. If you want to avoid getting cut while opening this rigid plastic, you can bust out the handy can opener.

Rigid plastic packages can be opened by simply treating them as a piece of metal with your can opener. Line up the can opener along the edge, ensure a tight grip, and then proceed to spin the tool to begin cutting. You'll be amazed at how easy these packages are to open now!

Trying to downsize? This list of things to do everyday can get you on the right track!

From Real Simple magazine...

30 Days to a Better Everything—

In this edition, we'll cover days 18-23



Day 18: Have your bills automatically drafted from your account. Keep an eye on your balance and make sure that you set a 5 day reminder on your calendar, prior to the bill being paid.

Day 19: Organize your jewelry box—comb through your jewelry to see if all are in wearing order. Detangle what you can, polish silver, dab peroxide on earring posts. Pull out anything you don't think you'll wear again and pass it on, sell it or donate it.

Day 20: Cut out some t-shirts. Everyone has that pile of collectible t-shirts that you've obtained over the years at events. For ones that you're just not wearing again, or ones that are too collectible to part with, consider framing one or two.

Day 21: Clean out your purse/wallet and de-bulk it. Throw out punch cards from closed-down coffee shops, old business cards, and file away any receipts you will need. Corral the things you want to keep—loose change, gift cards, face masks, etc. and put them back in their rightful places.

Day 22: Make your pet zone fetching! Fido has a bucket of toys, but how many does he play with? Go through the pile (when he's not looking of course) and toss barely-used toys. Still useable toys can be donated (and would be much appreciated) at your local animal shelter. Wipe down the food station and launder his bed cover.

Day 23: Conquer bathroom clutter. Find a better place for stuff that's hogging the valuable sink space. Round up all of the toiletries you've obtained on trips and stock your travel bag and guest bathroom. Put aside any extras to donate. Go through your hair supplies and toss old brushes or combs as well as items not used such as dryers, curling tools, etc. Organize everything and you'll be on your way to a fresh, organized bathroom!

Don't feel that clearing your clutter is just too overwhelming to deal with....



A little progress each day adds up to big results!!

AARP Watchdog Alert!!

Be especially wary when using third-party booking sites. According to a 2019 survey conducted by the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA), nearly a quarter of consumers reported being misled by travel resellers on the phone, or online, affecting \$5.7 billion transactions in 2018.

- Unscrupulous resellers draw consumers through search engine ads and send them, via links or posted phone numbers, to booking websites or call centers that appear to be affiliated with a hotel. The look-alike site will feature detailed descriptions of rooms and amenities; it might even have the hotel's name in the URL. But you are not actually dealing with the hotel. This can have consequences ranging from inconvenient (the reseller doesn't transmit special requests, such as wheelchair-accessible room) to expensive (higher rates than the hotel actually charges or hidden fees tacked on to your bill) to potentially trip ruining (you arrive and discover that the booking was never made).
- The AHLA includes a warning about these scams on its website, encouraging consumers to "book directly through the hotel website or mobile app, or through a trusted travel agent."

There's plenty more to look for. For example:

- Criminals operate look-alike websites for airlines, popular travel companies, tourist visa procurement, and federal Trusted Traveler programs like TSA PreCheck to harvest personal data from people who believe they're booking tickets or signing up for smoother airport screening.
- Scam emails offer promotions such as free flights to get you to give up credit card information or click bogus links that download malware.
- Bogus insurance brokers sell travel policies they falsely claim will cover coronavirus-related cancellations.
- Scammers make up vacation-rental listings, or duplicate real ones, to collect payments for nonexistent bookings.

Plan your trip and be safe!! Thanks to AARP for these great tips!!



Best Buys in September

Apparel at Labor Day Sales

Previous generation iPhones

TVs

SALE

Best Buys in October

Cars

Costumes

Pizza—October is National Pizza Month



All hail the great pumpkin!

Jack-o'-lanterns are the symbol of Halloween, but don't overlook them as a source of nutrition! Pumpkins are loaded with vitamin A and fiber, and are low in calories.

Other great fruits and veggies that are inexpensive buys for the Fall months are squash, apples, beets, cabbage, sweet potatoes and swiss chard. Pair these up with a simple rotisserie chicken for a healthy, nutritious, inexpensive meal that is quick to prepare and good for you!

Save at the grocery store.....be aware as you buy!

Crunch some numbers while you shop. If you keep a running tally of how much money is in your cart, you'll save yourself from any surprises when you get up to the checkout counter. Pull up the calculator on your phone and keep track of all those veggies, fruits and other staple items you're putting in your cart. This might make you stop and ask yourself, *Wait, do I really need that fancy \$5 sparkling water that isn't on sale?*

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

**You are
not alone.**

Caring call
specialists
available
24/7.



Call or text 988

OR CHAT ONLINE AT [988LIFELINE.ORG](https://988lifeline.org)



***Have a healthy, happy,
safe Fall!
Your MRSPA Consumer
Education Committee
cares about you!!!***