



SCARSDALE OFFICIAL Village Newsletter

Senior Safety Fair Connects Residents with Experts

For the second straight year, Scarsdale Edgemont Family Counseling Services Aging in Place Coordinator Stacey Cook, Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation Senior Club Coordinator Maida Silver and Scarsdale Public Library Programming Librarians Claudette Gassler and David Sadoff gathered representatives from The American Red Cross and senior-specific organizations, along with a panel of Scarsdale Fire Department (SFD), Scarsdale Police Department (SPD) and Scarsdale Volunteer Ambulance Corps (SVAC) experts to educate seniors on various safety procedures and programs available to them. The 2nd Annual Senior Safety Fair during National Safety Month was a hit as an engaged audience had a chance to ask questions and hear potentially life-saving information.

SFD Chief Christopher Mytych focused on the National Fire Protection Association's Eight Steps to Safety, which are summarized here:

1) If you are going to smoke, smoke out-



side.

2) Give space heaters space, at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn. They should also be plugged directly into a wall outlet, not a power strip or extension cord. And do not sleep with them running.

3) Stay in the kitchen when frying or cooking on the stovetop as cooking—notably unattended cooking—is the No. 1 cause of fires in the home. If you have to leave the room, shut the burner. Should there be a fire, quickly shut the heat source and slide

a lid over the top of the pan or pot to eliminate the oxygen, which fuels the fire along with the heat.

4) If your clothes catch on fire and you are able to stop, drop and roll, do so. If you can't get to the floor safely, you should quickly smother your clothing with a towel or blanket. Related to No. 3, avoid loose clothing when cooking.

5) Fire/smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are crucial for any residence. It is recommended to have one CO2 detector on each level of the home, while fire alarms need to be in every sleeping area and outside every sleeping area. To get free fire alarms installed in your home through the American Red Cross' home fire campaign register at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScMf3CbaD-DgSNUxpEESfUQGKRO7BeeljVTQQicgmCedi8ciNQ/viewform>.

6) Plan and practice escape routes from your house.

7) The fastest way to get help from SPD and SVAC is to call 911. Scarsdale uses Rap-

Scarsdale Emergency Numbers:

Police, Fire & SVAC: 911

Fire: also 914-722-1217

Scarsdale Non-Emergency Numbers:

Police: 914-722-1200

Fire: 914-722-1215

SVAC: 914-722-2288

id SOS, so any land line or cell call within Scarsdale's borders results in a direct connection. For SFD, 911 is also effective and quickly dialed, but the emergency phone number of 914-722-1217 goes directly to the dispatch center. The three

also work closely together in any emergency situation to provide the best outcome for anyone in need.

8) Plan your escape based upon your level of mobility. If you use a cane, walker, scooter or wheelchair, keep it close to the bed along with your glasses, phone and a flashlight to make it easier to get out of the home.

SFD offers free home fire safety inspections that are non-punitive—they do not report back to authorities regarding violations that may exist in a home. Inspectors are looking at the current detection system or needs, and for proper electrical and fuel burning systems, in addition to safe walking conditions within the home. You can schedule a walkthrough at SFD's non-emergency number, 914-722-1215 or by emailing fire@scarsdale.com.



For those who live alone or with someone who is vulnerable or has mobility issues, SPD has the RUOK program, which is an automated phone call at a designated time each day. When you pick up the call you press 1 to signify you are OK and if the call gets missed the SPD can do a wellness check. You can register for RUOK at <https://www.scarsdale.com/FormCenter/Department-of-Public-Safety-6/Are-You-OK-63>.

SFD also has a Lock Box Program, where a lock box with your keys and important information can be affixed near the front door and only the SFD would have access to the box in an emergency situation. Call the SFD non-emergency number at 911-722-1215 to learn more.

HOME SAFETY

SVAC Clinical Coordinator Stephanie Foley spoke in-depth about fall prevention and emergency preparedness.

Foley recommended some sort of a life alert necklace, bracelet or watch that offers two-way communication with a dispatcher who can call 911 for you. You can also set up a device such as an Alexa to make these important calls.

Foley said wearing thin, rubber-soled

shoes with shallow treads in the home—never just socks—will help avoid slipping. Using handrails and picking up the feet instead of shuffling when walking is also recommended. Treads on stairs are important for safety. In bathrooms, it's best to have slip mats in showers/tubs and on floors. A handrail by the toilet is also a good choice. Making sure water isn't too hot before entering the shower or tub is also recommended.

Avoiding sitting on low furniture is helpful and power lift chairs are recommended if you have help getting up from a sitting position.

Not wearing long night gowns can also prevent falls.

Proper lighting between the bedroom and bathroom will help seniors in normal circumstances and emergencies. Using some brighter paint around the edge of the stairs is also an option for seeing more clearly.

Removing tripping hazards throughout the home is key.

Getting regular exercise and stretching will help residents be more mobile.

A great way to help first responders help you in an emergency, especially in the case of being incapacitated and unable to re-



spond, is to have an updated File of Life that includes medical history, medications being taken and emergency contact information. The File of Life is usually kept on the refrigerator. These can also be done on your phone as well. Call SVAC's non-emergency number at 914-722-2288 to set up an appointment to fill out a File of Life.

SCAMS & BURGLARY PREVENTION

Detective Chirstopher Moleski, who is the Older Adult Advocate for SPD, had many tips not just for seniors, but universally for all residents when it comes to preventing falling for scams. He urges residents not to form online relationships with anyone they don't know and when it comes to phone call and email scams not to offer any information without making sure it's legitimate first. Residents should never send money or share passwords or other personal information with anyone unless they themselves have initiated the contact. Even when you're in public, keep an eye on your belongings to make sure purses, wallets and keys aren't stolen.

Moleski said it's best to call the police department's non-emergency line at 914-722-1200 when in doubt or to report a scam,

such as someone posing as a grandchild to get money.

When it comes to protecting your vehicle and your home, the rules are simple:

- 1) Lock your car.
- 2) Take the key inside.
- 3) Don't leave anything of value in your car.
- 4) Lock the door to your house.
- 5) Don't leave the keys in plain sight of a door or window, as burglars will force entry to get the keys to steal the car.

In addition to locking the doors and windows to your home, Moleski recommends alarm systems, surveillance systems and exterior motion sensor lighting. When you do leave your home for an extended period of time, it's best to make it look occupied with timers on the lights and making sure mail and packages are picked up.

Scarsdale has a Dark House Program for burglary prevention where residents can report to SPD when they will be away—for a couple of days to several weeks—so the department knows to keep an extra eye on the property. Call the non-emergency number at 914-722-1200 before you go leave and the police will also know how to contact you in case of emergency.

