



Loudoun County Fire and Rescue

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For Immediate Release:

Prevent Dangerous Mulch Fires Around Your Home or Business

Loudoun County Fire and Rescue reminds residents and business owners to use caution and common sense when it comes to the use of landscaping mulch.

Each year during spring and summer, hundreds of mulch fires are reported across the nation. These fires often start out small and undetected, but can quickly develop into a devastating fire, causing major damage to buildings, homes, and other structures.

The most common cause of mulch fires is human carelessness through improper discarding of smoking materials. Smokers often discard lit smoking materials, including matches, into landscaped areas as they enter or exit a building.



“Businesses and residences should provide and maintain safe receptacles for the disposal of smoking materials,” said Fire Chief W. Keith Brower, Jr. “Sturdy metal containers with sand, placed away from the structure, are best.”

Fires that start in landscaping mulch or other organic planting materials can spread quickly into shrubbery, up exterior walls and into the home or building. For this reason, we recommend leaving 18 inches between mulch and the exterior walls of all structures. To help prevent mulch fires at your home or business, please follow these safety tips:

- Keep landscaped mulch beds as moist as possible.
- Recognize that hot and dry spells, along with windy conditions allow mulch fires to start more readily.
- Maintain at least 18 inches of clearance between the edge of the mulch bed and combustible building materials, such as exterior vinyl siding and decks.
- Use non-combustible materials such as river rock, pea gravel or crushed rock for the first 18” around the base of a building with combustible siding and around gas and electrical meters.
- Consider using brick or non-combustible exterior siding when building or renovating a structure.
- Use only approved receptacles to dispose of matches, cigarettes and cigars such as sturdy metal or ceramic containers filled with sand, located away from the structure.
- Immediately report any smoke or fire by calling 9-1-1.

For more information on fire prevention, please visit www.loudoun.gov/firemarshal or contact Lisa Braun, Public Education Manager, at 571-258-3222.

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