

SAFETY TIPS



Firehouse Sentinel

Volume 1, Issue 1

September 2007



SHELTER IN PLACE - When You Need To Stay Where You Are To Be Safe

During an emergency, when your first public safety announcements tell you to Shelter in Place, follow these instructions immediately. Don't go anywhere. Stay inside. There may be any number of unknown hazardous materials in the air. It's time to hunker down. Your life may depend of your ability to protect your family inside your own home.

- Close and lock all windows and exterior doors.
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems.
- If you have a fireplace, close the damper.
- Gather your pets and keep them with you.
- Go to an interior room with phone, preferably one above ground.
- Use duct tape to seal all cracks or openings around windows and doors.
- Cover all vent openings in the room.
- Keep listening to your radio, television and phone until you are told it is safe to come out or to prepare for evacuation.

The City of Torrance has the ability to call all home phones in the vicinity of an emergency. We will tell you to shelter in place or evacuate. Stay close to your home phone because the automated system doesn't call cell phones.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS Why You Should Have Them And Know How They Work



The Fire Marshall recommends that every Torrance home come equipped with at least one 2A-10BC Dry Chemical Fire Extinguisher. This type of extinguisher can be used to put out many different types of fires. Make sure your extinguishers are where they can do the most good – in the high hazard areas of your home like the kitchen, workshop and garage. They should be easily accessible and their location known by all family members.

- If a fire starts, ensure that everyone is safely out of the house and that the all important 911 call has been made.
- If the fire extinguisher doesn't put out the fire, then leave immediately.
- Check your extinguisher periodically to ensure the pressure gauge is reading full.
- If your extinguisher doesn't have a gauge, take it off the wall and shake it to ensure the powder is still loose.
- Examine the hose and nozzle to make sure they appear in good working order.

Your fire extinguisher can keep a little fire from growing into a big one, so keep it handy and ready for use.

Letter from Our President

Greetings,

I'd like to introduce you to the first edition of the *Firehouse Sentinel*, your community newsletter sponsored by the Torrance Fire Association. As part of our ongoing commitment to keeping Torrance safe, we'll be publishing the *Sentinel* quarterly to provide you with the informational tools you need to better protect your family, home, business and community.

You'll find everything from general safety tips to what to do in case of a disaster. We'll also keep you posted about community events and alert you to public safety issues coming under advisement in City Council.

We want this newsletter to keep you informed about what's going on in Torrance that impacts your family, from recreational and philanthropic programs to city safety initiatives.

Now more than ever, it's imperative for first responders and community residents to be on the same page. We think the *Sentinel* will provide this kind of shared awareness that will make it possible for us to take care of ourselves as a self-sufficient community for the first 72 hours of a disaster and work together year-round for a safer, better informed Torrance.

We welcome your input to the *Sentinel*. Please send your comments, questions and event postings to the Torrance Firefighters Association, PO Box 3306, Torrance, CA 90510 or call 310-539-6889.

The Torrance Firefighters Association is 170 members strong and is financed by contributions from our members. These dues, plus our ongoing fundraising activities, made possible our sponsorship of five college scholarships, youth athletics and a variety of civic programs.

In the tradition of Torrance's first firefighters, who signed up when the city was founded in 1912, we stand ready to serve this community. The *Sentinel* is just one more way we're fulfilling our commitment to the people of Torrance.

Sincerely,

Otto Stiefel
President
Torrance Fire Association, Local 1138

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Safety Programs

The Vial of Life



The **Vial of Life** program helps you speak to first responders when you're incapacitated. Even if you're conscious, you may be disoriented and you certainly won't be in your most

composed, rational state. You may forget to tell paramedics something vital about your pre-existing health conditions. To help you tell emergency personnel what they need to know, prepare ahead of time with the Vial of Life. This simple procedure may save your life.

Go to VialofLife.com and print out the form and two decals. Complete the **Vial of Life** form with the requested medical information. You will want to have extra blank copies to accommodate changing prescriptions and medical conditions.

- Place the form and any other pertinent information for paramedics in a plastic bag.
- Add a photo if you have one.
- Put the plastic bag on your refrigerator and add a decal to make your bag very noticeable.
- Put the second decal on the outside of your front door. Paramedics know to look for this symbol.

You may also use an old prescription bottle to house your medical information. Just fold the form and put it inside the bottle, then place the bottle inside your refrigerator door as close to the handle as possible. Again, affix stickers on refrigerator and front door.

If you don't have access to a computer, **Vial of Life** forms and decals are available at your local fire department.

In The News

Torrance Gets Empty 5th Paramedic Bus City Council Says No to Staffing Unit at Expense of Public Safety

The good news is that City Council has recognized the need and approved a new 5th paramedic bus for Torrance. The troubling news is that there has been no funding set aside for the additional staff of six trained paramedics to man the bus 24/7, 365 days a year. What this means is that fire personnel from other critical departments like HazMat are being transferred to cover the 5th unit. Already short-handed half a dozen firefighters, the department is now shifting personnel from equally important areas to the new paramedic squad. We are stretching already thin resources and we are concerned about how this affects public safety. We think you'll be concerned too. We hope you're concerned enough to call your council members.

Public safety must always be the number one priority of Torrance city government.

Torrance is a thriving, growing city with an estimated 2005 population of 142,384. It's the sixth largest city in L.A. County and the 34th largest in the state. The fire department must protect a sprawling 20-square-mile, mixed residential-industrial area, which includes homes, apartments, businesses, schools, one of the country's largest malls and huge refineries.

The Torrance Fire Department made 13,000 life-saving runs over the past year. The volume has been growing from 2% to 5% every year. We welcome the 5th paramedic unit because 80-90% of our calls require medical help. For this new unit to realize its full potential as an asset to the community, we need to man it properly without taking away from other needed services.

City Council has talked about funding only for "peak staffing," which basically works on the theory that most emergencies will happen at certain hours and staffing will rise proportionally. As firefighters, we know that heart attacks and apartment fires happen when least expected. You don't want to be the non-peak-hour emergency because we won't be adequately staffed.

We urge you to take a moment and let City Council know that an understaffed fire department is not acceptable, that your family's safety comes first. Your support will be greatly appreciated.

Community Events



Disaster Preparedness Expo Saturday, Sept. 29, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Torrance Cultural Arts Center

To help the citizens of Torrance prepare for disasters, the City of Torrance Emergency Services Division is sponsoring a free Disaster Preparedness Expo on Saturday, September 29 from 10 am until 2 pm at the Torrance Cultural Arts Complex, 3300 Civic Center Drive.

This event will be fun and educational for the entire family. Torrance's first responders will join various exhibitors to show you what you'll need in case of a major emergency.

The Torrance Fire Department and Hazardous Materials Teams, along with members of the Search and Rescue Division, will share rescue procedures and safety tips. In addition, the Torrance Police Department will be on hand with displays featuring the City's Animal Control Unit, SWAT and South Bay Platoon.

For more information or questions regarding the Expo, contact the Torrance Emergency Services Coordinator at 310-618-5725.

In Our Schools

Each year, the **Torrance Firefighters Association awards five \$1000 scholarships** to the city's graduating seniors -- one scholarship to each high school: West High, North High, South High, Torrance High and Bishop Montgomery. All unmarried, graduating seniors are eligible, if they have attended Torrance schools the last four years. Applicants must have proof of citizenship or proof of applying for citizenship. Students are chosen on the criteria of scholastic and athletic ability, citizenship, service to school and community, awards received, character, personality, interests, attitude and financial need. Each school chooses six candidates. The association then selects three to interview, and from these three, awards a scholarship to one outstanding senior from each school.

To receive the grant, candidates must attend an accredited four-year college and take at least 12 units. If they plan to go to junior college, the grant will be held in trust until they begin studies at a four-year institution.

For more information on how your child may qualify for the TFFA scholarships, contact the scholarship counselor at your high school. All six applicant packages from each high school must be sent to the TFFA scholarship chairperson by May 1, 2008. With school starting now, it's time for the senior in your home to start finding out what it takes to be a TFFA winner in the spring.



Your Torrance Fire Association

Visit our website at:
www.torrancefirefighters.org

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The **Firehouse Sentinel** is published quarterly by Freeman Public Affairs on behalf of the Torrance Fire Association, Local 1138.
www.freemanpublicaffairs.com

Serving Torrance Residents for 85 years

TORRANCE FIRE ASSOCIATION Local 1138

