

March 14th – March 20th

During the week of March 14th – March 20th the Virginia Fire Department responded to a total 81 calls, seven fire and 74 medical calls. The medical calls can be split into 22 transfers and fifty-two 9-1-1 calls. During this week the transfers brought us to three different hospitals: once to Fairview Range Medical Center, twice to Essentia Health North Pines, and the rest to Essentia Health Virginia. We brought these patients to only two different hospitals, three times to St. Luke's the rest to Essentia Health St. Mary's, one patient this week was returned to a nursing home. The fifty-two medical 9-1-1 calls brought us to six different communities; once to Embarrass and Gilbert, twice to the Iron area and Mt. Iron, three times to Eveleth, and the rest, 43 calls, in Virginia. These patients were brought to only two different hospitals three to Fairview Range Medical center, 45 to Essentia health Virginia, and four patients didn't need to be transported to a hospital. During this week the busiest day was Monday with 13 medical calls and the slowest day was Saturday with seven medical calls. Again the number one reason for dispatch was Cardiac in nature, with us treating more women (40) than men (34) the average age was 60 this week. During this week, out of our fifty-two 9-1-1 calls, 45 were less than five miles from our station, four calls were 6-10 miles away, two calls were 10-20 miles away, and one call was further than 20 miles from our department to the scene of the emergency.

During this week the Fire Marshall was busy following up on several correction orders and different complaints. As well as completing another initial inspection. The Marshall has also been busy working with the Mountain Iron Fire Department on Knox Box issues.

Now that the weather is warming up and we are starting to do more work outside the Virginia Fire Department would like to encourage you to think about back safety. OUCH! Why did I try to lift that much weight on my own?" Did you ever wonder those words after you lifted something heavy, or lifted from an awkward position? After all last year or five years ago I could lift this without a problem. These incidents are well known causes of back strain, but you might not have considered other "underlying" factors that lead to back injury. Several conditions influence your back health.

The cause of most back problems is poor posture, loss of flexibility, stressful living/working habits and above all, a general decline in physical fitness. Surprised? You shouldn't be. When you "let yourself go," (and most of us do with age) the *first* thing to *go* can be back strength. Along with correct lifting techniques, we should also work on our overall physical condition.

Nutrition--is an important key to staying physically fit! As we grow older, our metabolism slows down. To counteract this natural event, we have to eat the right types of food-and not too much of it-or the pounds come on quickly! Now, what does nutrition have to do with a healthy back? For one thing, a healthy back is correctly balanced on your spine. Carrying around excess weight puts tremendous strain on back tissues, so lifting even a small extra load may cause an injury.

Exercise--plays an important role as well. A form of exercise as simple as walking 30 minutes a day can raise your heart rate and burn enough calories to help keep you lean. Flexibility is another condition that changes as we grow older, if we don't work to retain it. It's true, as they say-"Use it or lose it!" Without flexibility, we lose our body's full range of motion. Then, when a sudden, physical demand takes a muscle or joint further than it's used to, the risk of injury is high. You can do stretching exercises every morning to keep yourself flexible and ready for the physical demands of work. After all, don't athletes warm up before a game to prevent injury? Here at the Virginia Fire Department we regularly do workouts involving both yoga and kettlebell sessions to keep us in shape and prevent injuries.

Fixed positions--not moving *enough*--can also cause back problems. Staying in a fixed position for too long can lead to muscle spasms. We feel it as stiffness, but by the time discomfort from "static" muscle contractions is

experienced, low level tissue damage has begun. Take stretch breaks between long standing or sitting periods to improve circulation and prevent back strain.

Poor body mechanics and bad lifting habits usually "trigger" a back injury-and are more likely to do so if overall physical condition is poor. Remember these techniques to help escape injury:

- Avoid using fast, jerking motions when lifting.
- Avoid bending and twisting at the same time.
- Avoid handling a load too far away! Keep the load close to your body.
- Teamwork! If the load is too heavy, two people should carry the load.

It's Up To You--Take Good Care Of Your Body and Save Your Back!