

May 23rd – May 29th

During the week of May 23rd – May 29th the Virginia Fire Department responded to a total of seventy-one calls with sixty-nine of them being medical in nature. Of the sixty-nine medical calls, forty-seven of them were 9-1-1 calls and twenty-two were transfers. The twenty-two transfers all were from Essentia Health Virginia. These patients were transported to the following facilities: Miller Dwan, St. Luke's, Essentia Medical St. Mary's, and to nursing homes. The forty-seven 9-1-1 calls brought us to; Cook, Gilbert, and Britt once, Iron and Tower twice, Mountain Iron eight times, and the rest were in Virginia. We transported these patients to four different hospitals: Essentia Health Virginia, Essentia Health St. Mary's, St. Luke's, and Fairview Range Medical Center. During this week we performed seventy-four different procedures and administered fifty-nine medications. Our busiest day was Monday and Thursday both having thirteen medical calls the slowest day was Tuesday with only four calls. During this week we treated more women (37) than men (32) with the average age being 65 years old. We have done 201 more medical calls in 2016 (1489) than we did in 2015 (1281) during the same time frame.

The Fire Marshall kept busy during this week by providing input to the city council on the proposed property maintenance code, continued working on a fire investigation, did two public relations events, and inspected Knox Boxes.

If the summer ever shows up to stay, the Virginia Fire Department would like to share some swimming safety tips. Just a friendly reminder that it doesn't take long for an accident to happen, and according to the CDC, from 2005-2014 an average of 3,536 fatal unintentional drownings (non-boating related) occurred annually in the United States, which is about ten deaths per day. An additional 332 people died each year from drowning in boating-related incidents. About one in five people who die from drowning are children 14 and younger. For every child who dies from drowning, another five receive emergency department care for nonfatal submersion injuries. More than 50% of drowning victims treated in emergency departments require hospitalization or transfer for further care (compared with a hospitalization rate of about 6% for all unintentional injuries). These nonfatal drowning injuries can cause severe brain damage that may result in long-term disabilities such as memory problems, learning disabilities, and permanent loss of basic functioning (e.g., permanent vegetative state).

Pool Safety

- Never leave children alone in or near the pool or spa, even for a moment; close supervision by a responsible adult is the best way to prevent drowning in children.
- Whenever children under age 5 are in or around water, an adult – preferably one who knows how to swim and perform CPR – should be within arm's length, providing "touch supervision."
- Install a fence at least 4 feet high around all four sides of the pool. The fence should not have openings or protrusions that a young child could use to get over, under, or through.

- Make sure pool gates open out from the pool, and self-close and self-latch at a height children cannot reach. Consider alarms on the gate to alert you when someone opens the gate. Consider surface wave or underwater alarms as an added layer of protection.
- The safest fence is one that surrounds all four sides of the pool and completely separates the pool from the house and yard. If the house serves as the fourth side of the fence, install an alarm on the exit door to the yard and the pool. For additional protection, install window guards on windows facing the pool. Drowning victims have also used pet doors to gain access to pools. Keep all of your barriers and alarms in good repair with fresh batteries.
- Keep rescue equipment (a shepherd's hook – a long pole with a hook on the end — and life preserver) and a portable telephone near the pool. Choose a shepherd's hook and other rescue equipment made of fiberglass or other materials that do not conduct electricity.
- Avoid inflatable swimming aids such as "floaties." They are not a substitute for approved life vests and can give children and parent a false sense of security.
- Children over age 1 may be at a lower risk of drowning if they have had some formal swimming instruction. However, there is no evidence that swimming lessons or water survival skills courses can prevent drowning in babies younger than 1 year of age.
- The decision to enroll a child over age one in swimming lessons should be made by the parent based on the child's developmental readiness and exposure to water, but swim programs should never be seen as "drown proofing" a child of any age.
- Avoid entrapment: Suction from pool and spa drains can trap a swimmer underwater. Do not use a pool or spa if there are broken or missing drain covers. Ask your pool operator if your pool or spa's drains are compliant with the Pool and Spa Safety Act. If you have a swimming pool or spa, ask your pool service representative to update your drains and other suction fitting with anti-entrapment drain covers and other devices or systems. *See PoolSafely.gov for more information on the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act.*
- Large, inflatable, above-ground pools have become increasingly popular for backyard use. Children may fall in if they lean against the soft side of an inflatable pool. Although such pools are often exempt from local pool fencing requirements, it is essential that they be surrounded by an appropriate fence just as a permanent pool would be so that children cannot gain unsupervised access.
- If a child is missing, look for him or her in the pool or spa first.
- Share safety instructions with family, friends and neighbors.

Open Water Swimming

- Never swim alone. Even good swimmers need buddies!
- A lifeguard (or another adult who knows about water rescue) needs to be watching children whenever they are in or near the water. Younger children should be closely supervised while in or near the water – use "touch supervision," keeping no more than an arm's length away.

- Make sure your child knows never to dive into water except when permitted by an adult who knows the depth of the water and who has checked for underwater objects.
- Never let your child swim in any fast moving water.