

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service to host series of events during National Fire Safety Week October 1st-8th

Clare County Fire and Rescue Service has reported a steady increase in the number of road traffic incidents around the county.

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Between January and August this year, the Service was called out to 168 road traffic incidents in Clare - an increase of over 31% on figures for the same period in 2006. However, the number of forest, grass and bog fire incidents dropped by 18%, domestic fires were down 11% to 59 and chimney fire cases dropped significantly by 21%.

The release of the statistics coincides with the Clare launch of National Fire Safety Week 2007, which runs from 1st-8th October 2007. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will host the 6th annual North-South initiative, in association with the National Safety Council and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service. Clare County Fire and Rescue Service will also take part by hosting a series of local prevention activities to heighten fire safety awareness.

Commenting on the number of incidences attended by Clare County Fire and Rescue Service, Adrian Kelly, Chief Fire Officer explained, "The steady increase in the number of road traffic incidence around Clare remains a real cause for concern. The 31% increase in call outs to such incidents in the first eight months of 2007 highlights the importance of promoting road safety awareness initiatives."

Mr. Kelly expressed disappointment that the number of false alarms continued to remain high.

He said, "There were 114 false alarms, 33 of which were malicious, in the first eight months of 2007. Such call outs result in Clare County Fire and Rescue Service resources being deployed unnecessarily."

Meanwhile, Mr. Kelly said that the significant drop in the number of chimney and domestic fires indicated that members of the public were becoming more fire safety conscious.

"Sadly, the number of incidences of fire in Clare remains unacceptably high, which is why I would encourage householders to use their own initiative to learn and do more about fire prevention in the home. This is one the main messages we will be conveying during Fire Safety Week 2007", added Mr. Kelly.

Commenting on this year's theme of 'Smoke kills - be alarmed', Mr. Kelly stated, "Recent statistics show that smoke alarms were not present in 61% of fatal fires in Ireland. On average 46 people die in the Republic of Ireland each year from fire while a further 1,000 people suffer serious injuries from burns and smoke inhalation. In most of these incidents, a level of fire safety education and awareness could have prevented the fire or limited the damage."

He continued, "Fitting a smoke alarm is the simplest step you can take to reduce the risk of fire. Therefore, it is imperative that people are encouraged to not only properly install the devices but also get into the habit of testing them once a week and immediately replacing faulty batteries."

"The upcoming fire safety week will highlight the importance of testing your smoke alarms weekly, having your escape route planned and knowing your obligations regarding fire safety in the home. We will also be requesting that schools and businesses to also undertake fire drills during National Fire Safety Week", said Mr. Kelly.

Throughout National Fire Safety Week 2007, the Clare County Fire and Rescue Service will be promoting the proper use of smoke alarms through local newspaper advertisements and an information slot on Clare FM's 'Morning Focus' show. The Service will also host open station nights at Ennistymon, Shannon, Ennis, Killaloe, Scariff, Kilkee and Kilrush where local fire fighters will be in attendance to offer advice and give out leaflets and posters in relation to fire prevention.

Open nights will take place at the following:

Ennistymon Fire Station, 7-9pm, Monday 1st October 2006

Shannon Fire Station, 7-9pm, Monday 1st October 2007

Ennis Fire Station, 7-9pm, Tuesday 2nd October 2007

Kilrush Fire Station, 6.30-8.30pm, Wednesday 3rd October 2007

Kilkee Fire Station, 7-9pm, Wednesday 3rd October 2007

Scariff Fire Station, 6-8pm, Thursday 4th October 2007

Clare County Fire and Rescue Service is presently involved in numerous other fire safety initiatives around the County. So far this year, Firefighters have visited 120 schools around the County providing giving Fire Safety Advice Sessions to over 3,700 children. The Programme is expected to continue in the 2007-08 school year. Elsewhere, the Smoke Detector Programme for Venerable groups continues in partnership with Clare County Council's Community & Enterprise Section. Service Firefighters continue to make Home Fire Safety visits in the Ennis area, with a similar scheme due to be undertaken in Kilrush in the near future. Meanwhile, regular fire safety inspections also continue to be undertaken by Firefighters in hotels and nightclubs.

The Clare County Fire and Rescue Service fleet consists of 27 vehicles including 14 Class B Fire Appliances, 3 Water Tankers, 5 Four Wheel Drives, 2. Aerial Rescue Vehicles, 2 Emergency Tenders and a Mechanics Van. The Service Headquarters is located at Central Fire Station, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

In the event of a fire in your home 'Get Out, Stay Out And Call the Fire Brigade Out'. The Fire Service can be contacted by dialling 999.

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