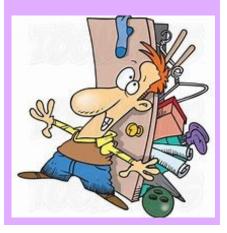
BEVERLY HILLS FIRE DEPARTMENT PRESENTS:



Hoarding Awareness & Fire Risks

What is hoarding...

- Collecting or keeping large amounts of various items in the home due to strong urges to save them or distress experienced when discarding them.
- Many rooms in the home are filled with possessions that the residents can no longer use the room as designed.
- The home is overloaded with things that everyday living is compromised.
- An estimated 3% to 5% of Americans suffer from hoarding, which was officially recognized as a disorder.



Why Hoarding Increases Fire Risks:

• Cooking can become unsafe due to the flammable/combustible items being too close to the stove or oven.



- Fixed and portable heating units become unsafe because there are no clearances to maintain and if a portable unit tips over or is too close to a pile it can cause a fire.
- Electrical equipment / wiring can get damaged by weight of piles (generating heat). Cords get worn or can get chewed on by pests. Damaged wires can start fires.
- Open flames such as candles or smoking are very dangerous in areas where there is a lot of clutter.
- Blocked pathways and exits from piles of clutter can hinder rescue efforts or escaping from a fire.
- Adjacent occupied structures can be quickly affected when a fire occurs, due to the excessive smoke and fire conditions.
- Hoarding can also lead to slipping and tripping hazards. Another concern are health issues such as diseases caused by fecal matter and urine from rodents. (Hantavirus)

How Hoarding Impacts First Responders:

- Hoarding puts fire responders in harms way.
- Firefighters cannot move swiftly through a home filled with clutter. It makes rescue operations more difficult.
- Responders can be trapped in a home when exits are blocked. They can get injured by objects falling or tipping over from piles.
- The weight of the stored items, especially if water is added to put out a fire, can lead to the floor weakening and floor or structure collapse.
- The fire load in the house is magnified tremendously, thus intensifying the heat, movement and growth of the fire.

How can Hoarding be Addressed:

- When talking to a person who hoards, focus on safety rather than the clutter. Be empathetic. Match the persons language when
- describing items. If they call it their "collection" or "things", use the same words.
- Install working smoke alarms and test them monthly.
- Help resident make a home safety and escape plan.
- Reach out to community resources, County Health Agencies. Or other available resources that specialize in hoarding situations.

