



Winchester Fire and Rescue

FIRE, RESCUE, HAZARDOUS MATERIALS & EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

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TO: All Fire and Rescue Personnel

FROM: Gary Ganoë, Fire Marshal

RE: Children and Emergency Apparatus

DATE: October 8, 2009

Fire safety education is an important part in preventing childhood injuries and fatalities. As such, our department participates in many events throughout the year teaching fire safety messages to a variety of age groups. Many young children anticipate climbing into the cab of a fire truck just to turn the big steering wheel, or climb into the patient compartment of an ambulance to see where the patients lie down. Younger children in particular have a short attention span so the fire safety message we deliver is limited but an opportunity to climb into one of these rigs is exciting for them.

Recently, there have been inquiries as to whether or not children can be placed in the patient area of an ambulance during fire prevention activities. The answer to this is simple, YES. Even though precautions must be taken to avoid any exposure to blood borne pathogens, this should be a mute issue as all ambulances are required to be disinfected daily. If an ambulance unit responds to an emergency and transports a patient, the ambulance **must be** disinfected prior to any children entering the patient area of an ambulance at a public education event.

When teaching fire safety, be mindful of the individual age groups cognitive skills. Props, handouts and individual contact with children are our best means to get the safety message across. Recently new instructional material was presented to Shenandoah University in hopes of reaching out to younger adults who most likely haven't had any fire safety training since the fifth grade. You would be surprised how many of them remember the fire safety messages that were delivered to them years ago.

If at any time you have questions, comments and/or concerns relating to fire safety education, please contact me.