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CFAY Observes Fire Prevention Month

Photos by MC2 Conner Houghtaling, CFAY Public Affairs



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Igniting Awareness: Celebrating Fire Prevention Month at CFAY

Story by Garrett Cole, CFAY Public Affairs

In the heart of Yokosuka, where the sea meets the land and a vibrant community thrives, October carries special significance. It's a time when the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) community comes together for a crucial mission – ensuring the safety and well-being of its residents. At the forefront of this endeavor is Sean Rutledge, the Assistant Chief of Fire Prevention, who shares his passion for fire safety and a month-long celebration dedicated to it.

Since 1922, the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) has championed Fire Prevention Week, a tradition now spanning 101 years. Yet, CFAY does things a bit differently. While the rest of the nation observes fire prevention for a week, CFAY extends the commitment to an entire month. It's a testament to their unwavering dedication to safety. This year's theme, "Safety Starts with You," focuses on cooking safety.

"We want everyone to be aware of cooking hazards and to be safe around the kitchen," emphasizes Rutledge. It's a message backed by startling statistics: 49% of home fires originate in the kitchen or are related to kitchen safety issues.

CFAY hosts a series of engaging events throughout October to bring this vital message home. Two major open house events have already occurred, one at Fire Station One on the main base and another at the Ikego Fire Station. These events are informative and fun, featuring parades, joint drills with the Yokosuka City Fire Department, and educational activities that captivate young and old alike.

But the commitment continues beyond there. On Oct. 20, a safety talk at the library will further educate the community, and Sullivan's elementary classes will visit the fire station to gain firsthand knowledge about fire safety. Annual high-rise evacuation drills ensure that

residents of the housing towers are well-prepared in case of emergencies.

"Fire Prevention Month is important because it allows us to push the message about fire safety," Rutledge emphasizes. "It helps cut down incidents by getting that education to the local community that they normally wouldn't get. I feel our big October push really helps with our data and lowers fire casualties and incidents throughout the year."

For Rutledge, being the Chief of Fire Prevention is a source of immense pride. "I feel like it gives me a good sense of pride in knowing that I'm helping educate families, kids, and everyone living in CFAY and Navy Region Japan communities. I just feel really good that they can learn something about fire safety, and I can be a part of that."

He also extends heartfelt gratitude to the community and the entire fire department organization. "Our firefighters, fire inspectors, and fire prevention staff work really hard throughout the whole year to keep us safe and respond to emergencies, especially in October. Our fire inspectors work really hard in educating the public, and I just want to give a shout-out and props to my staff and the fire department organization as a whole."

As Fire Prevention Month unfolds at CFAY, it's not just a tradition; it's a commitment to safeguarding the community's well-being. It reflects the spirit that "Safety Starts with You" and is a testament to the dedication of individuals like Sean Rutledge, who ensure that every day is a day for safety, not just in October but throughout the year.

For more than 75 years, CFAY has provided, maintained, and operated base facilities and services in support of the U.S. 7th Fleet's forward-deployed naval forces, tenant commands, and thousands of military and civilian personnel and their families.