



EJC/005
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Dorset Fire and Rescue Service launch brand new 'SaFE U' in time for Electrical Safety week

Next Thursday morning (26th January 2012) Dorset Fire and Rescue Service is launching its brand new Safety and Fire Education Unit (SaFE U) at Service Headquarters, Poundbury, Dorchester.

The 23rd-29th January is Electrical Fire Safety week and this is the perfect opportunity to showcase the Service's brand new vehicle. The new display unit is a converted fire engine, that used to be operational at Bridport Fire Station and has attended incidents across the county. It will now not only be able to show the public the dangers of electrical appliances and supply in the home but also provide tips on how to mitigate these issues and live safer at home.

Shocking statistics show that half of all accidental house fires in the UK in 2010/11 were caused by faulty or misused electrical equipment. From faulty fridges and abandoned irons to dodgy plugs and wiring, electrical equipment can be an unnoticed fire hazard in the home. With the recent cold weather, many sockets could still be overloaded with space heaters and electric blankets. During 2011, Dorset Fire and Rescue Service alone attended over 220 accidental fires in the home, with an electrical cause.

DFRS has decided to launch this vehicle as well as joining forces with the Electrical Safety Council and the Fire Kills campaign to make sure people know the risks and take care when using electrics in their home.

Chief Fire Officer Darran Gunter said: "Electrical equipment is an inescapable part of all our lives, from essentials like heating and lights to luxuries like entertainment systems or beauty products. We need to be able to make the communities of Dorset aware of some the incidents these day to day items can cause and our new vehicle

will allow us to have a much more visible presence in our communities. Not only will we be able to talk and demonstrate electrical safety, but at the same time we can show how sprinklers work and demonstrate their effectiveness in reducing fire damage. The Dorset Fire Authority and I are working hard to make Dorset's communities safer and reduce the amount of fires we attend. This new vehicle, one of our old operational fire engines, is another tool which allows us to achieve this aim."

To help keep you and your family safe from fire, Dorset Fire and Rescue Service provides free home fire risk checks and, where necessary, free smoke alarms. By calling 01305 252600 you can arrange for a firefighter to visit your home and offer fire safety advice specific to you and your household.

ENDS

Notes to editors

Members of the press are invited to this launch, which will start at 11.30am. There will be a showcase of the capabilities of the new vehicle and you will be able to see how it will be used across Dorset. There will be the opportunity to take photos, footage and interview CFO Darran Gunter. Please inform Emily Cheeseman if you wish to attend on 01305 252612 or email emily.cheeseman@dorsetfire.gov.uk

Dorset Fire and Rescue Service recommend that members of the public follow the simple electrical safety information below:

- Don't overload plug sockets
- Regularly check for worn or frayed wires
- Unplug appliances when not in use
- Keep appliances clean and in good working order
- Consider using an RCD – Residual Current Device - which works like a circuit breaker to protect against electric shocks and reduces the risk of electrical fires

Emily Cheeseman

Communication Officer

Dorset Fire and Rescue Service HQ

Peeverell Avenue West, Poundbury, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 3SU
Switch Board 01305 252600 Tel 01305 252612 Fax 01305 252799
emily.cheeseman@dorsetfire.gov.uk www.dorsetfire.co.uk