

Fire and Rescue Service – Supporting Community Environmental Spring Clean Up Campaigns to Prevent Deliberate Fires.

Over £40 Million goes up in smoke each year due to the high number of fires involving rubbish and refuse. Scottish Fire and Rescue Services attend over 21,500 calls annually to deliberate fires involving rubbish bins, refuse skips and grass/heathland, many of which spread to homes and business properties.

Commercial and household waste bins together with illegal dumping of waste materials provides a ready source of combustible materials for opportunistic fire setters and as a result fire vandalism is on the increase.

Frequent fire setting is a signal indicator that vandalism and antisocial behaviour is going unchallenged within many neighbourhoods and often fire is used as a means of intimidating, harassing or victimising communities and individuals. The Fire and Rescue Service is therefore supporting improved refuse uplift and neighbourhood Spring clean-up arrangements and also calling for increased intervention and enforcement to better protect communities from fire vandalism.

It is also a growing health and environmental problem with the toxic combustion products and carbon emissions arising from deliberate fire setting putting communities at risk and undermining attempts by Local Authorities to improve local air quality and meet carbon reduction targets.

Public safety and well-being are our main concern say Fire Officers who are calling for tighter controls over the sale of cigarette lighters and matches to children and young people together with tougher penalties for fire setting offenders.

The Fire and Rescue Service is also very keen to highlight the success of neighbourhood environmental clean-up Campaigns, early demolition of derelict property and improvements to refuse collection and uplift schemes. Together with high profile fly tipping and enforcement campaigns and prosecution of offenders.

Local businesses are being urged to manage and dispose of 'trade waste' safely and responsibly as many refuse fires involve commercial skips, waste containers or illegally discarded trade waste. The cost and disruption of deliberate fire setting to businesses is increasing very often forcing businesses to cease trading.

More needs to be done in partnership with Local Authority Waste Management Services, SEPA, Police, Community Wardens, Housing providers and Businesses to minimise fire-setting and to report and apprehend offenders.

We can no longer accept high levels of fire setting and fire vandalism within communities and the associated waste of public money, health and environmental risks say fire officers and are asking communities and businesses to join the fight against fire by managing and disposing of waste to preventing fires and by helping identify and report offenders.

The public are asked to report any fly tipping or accumulations of rubbish and refuse their Local Authority or to the national 'Dumb Dumpers' Stop line operated by SEPA Tel 08452304090. And also to report any persons suspected of being involved in deliberate fire setting to Police or anonymously to Crimestoppers Scotland Tel 0800555111.

For further information contact Springburn Community Fire Station on 0141 558 2223.