

# FIREHOUSE®

## Weekly Drill

### DRILL #91: FIRE STATION SAFETY

#### Introduction

All too often an injury that a firefighter sustains could have been prevented. While performing our daily work around the fire station, we are confronted with a plethora of hazards. Many we take for granted. I have previously listed some of the more common hazards, however, there are many more that you can find in your own stations.

Many industrial manufacturing operations have established safety rules. A common rule is that of not wearing jewelry (this includes the wearing of wedding bands). My department had a firefighter lose a finger because his wedding band got caught while removing an object off an upper shelf.

Hearing protection should be worn when operating power tools, cutting the grass, or when loud noises are present. Additionally, lifting heavy objects has injured more firefighters than I would like to mention. Before lifting any equipment or object ask yourself these three questions:

1. Can I lift this by myself, or so I need assistance?
2. Is there a better way than lifting, such as using a hand cart or dolly?
3. If I must lift the object, is lifting with my legs from a squatting position the safest method?

Tool maintenance is a major part of a firefighter's job. Grinding wheels are a necessity for cleaning and sharpening hand tools. When using this equipment, proper safety equipment should be worn, including hearing and eye protection. And remember, before using any equipment, it should be checked for proper operation and condition.

Daily house work includes mopping floors. If the floors are not dry, a slip hazard may exist; proper foot wear and care in these areas is a must. Along with the daily housework, firefighters may find themselves cutting the lawn or removing snow from the driveway. Procedures such as prohibiting the refueling of hot engines, cleaning the area of debris and wearing proper safety equipment should be adhered to.



Not all fire stations have a pole to quickly get from an upper floor to the apparatus floor, but many do. In some of the older fire stations this pole hole may not have the safety equipment that prevents accidental falls. But this is an easily avoidable source of firefighter injury. The easiest way not to get hurt is: "Don't use the pole!" However, if you must use the pole follow these two reasonable rules:

1. Look below before you go. Sometimes items have been placed in the area at the bottom of the pole hole causing a hazard to the firefighter sliding down the pole. At other times, another firefighter might already be on the pole descending, allow that firefighter time to get out of the way.
2. Use your legs to help break your slide, but don't break a leg. Firefighters have been known to lose control while sliding the pole and have been faced with a harder landing than anticipated, breaking a leg. Maintain control throughout your descent.

*—Prepared by Russell Merrick*