

Understand pet laws when living off post

People who have pets or are considering getting one should consider the following when renting a house or apartment in the Lawton community.

Not all landlords allow pets, and if they do, they can only allow a certain type of pet or breed, weight limitation and a certain number.

Be prepared to pay a pet fee. This fee is a charge to allow you to keep a pet in the rental. Some landlords may opt to charge a monthly

pet rent. It does not go toward damages and does not get refunded. Conversely, a pet deposit is refundable if the renter's pet inflicts no damages. Either a pet fee or deposit can be for each pet you own. Any damage caused by your pet is your responsibility, and the landlord can charge you to make required repairs, either during the time you live there or prepare to move out. The landlord may require you to have the car-



Did you know?

By Col. Paul Hossenlopp
Fort Sill Garrison commander

pets professionally cleaned upon move out or the cleaning fee can be deducted from the security deposit. All of these items should clearly be laid out in the lease or rental agreement. Before signing

this agreement understand what you are signing and know your responsibilities.

Pet owners must comply when living in the city limits and know the laws and ordinances of Lawton governing

pet licensing, vaccinations and control.

City licenses are available from the Lawton Animal Shelter, 2104 SW 6th St. Proof of current rabies vaccination is required to purchase and/or validate each license. You are allowed three pets, either dogs or cats.

You may own up to seven pets, again dogs or cats, over the age of six months, but will require a special handler's license for each animal.

Having a pet can be great stress relief and bring you much joy. At the same time, it is a big responsibility keeping them controlled and on leash when outside. It is against the law for any owner to permit any animal to run at large. Those people who do, and are caught, may have to pay fines for those pet violations.

For more information, call the Lawton Animal Welfare Division at 581-3219.

Safety essential for warm winter homes

By Fort Sill Fire Prevention Office

With cold weather already setting in, now is the time to think safety to stay warm at home.

Have all heating appliances — furnaces, water heaters and wood stoves — checked and serviced yearly by a reliable professional.

Make sure no flammable materials have been placed near any heating appliance over the summer, when the appliance was not in use.

Use space heaters with care and inspect electric heaters for damaged cords.

Make sure there is a working smoke detector on every level of the home. Check the batteries every six months (Daylight Saving Time changes in March and November are a good rule of thumb) and replace them yearly.

Develop a home fire escape plan with two exits from every room. Establish a meeting place in a safe location so all family members can be accounted for. Call the fire department from a phone, at a neighbor's home or other safe location. Never re-enter a burning building

for any reason. Practice your home escape plan every six months and consider practicing it at night when most home fires occur.

Consider installing carbon monoxide detectors on every level of the home near the sleeping areas where the audible alarm can be heard. If the alarm goes off, exit the home and call 911.

Recognize the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning and exit the home immediately, if you suspect the presence of carbon monoxide. Call 911 from a safe location.

Heat yes, burn no

Most home heating fires involve portable heaters and space heaters, with gas and kerosene heaters accounting for the highest fatality risk. But all heating systems, including fireplaces, can be dangerous if not used and maintained properly. Before buying any heating equipment, check with your local fire department to ensure what you're buying conforms to local building or fire codes. When shopping for portable or space heaters,

look for automatic shut-off safety features. All portable heaters should bear the mark of an independent testing laboratory (UL or FM) indicating that the heater has met basic safety standards.

Wood-burning stoves

To protect the floor under wood-burning stoves from heat or stray embers, put down approved floor coverings endorsed by a testing lab. Install wood-burning stoves at least three feet away from walls and furniture, unless the stove is rated for lesser clearance. Keep all combustible materials away from the stove and its chimney connection.

Fireplaces

When you use your fireplace, protect your home from sparks by using a fire screen made of sturdy metal or heat-tempered glass. Burn only seasoned wood. Do not burn rubbish or scraps of treated lumber. Add wood carefully; sparks can escape

into the room while the screen is open. Be sure dampers are in working order, and never leave fires unattended, especially in an area used by children or pets.

Vents, chimneys

All fueled heaters must be vented to prevent dangerous carbon monoxide build-up in your home.

Creosote and carbon deposits caused by inefficient burning in fireplaces and wood stoves can coat chimney flues and pose a fire hazard. Have your chimney inspected by a professional before each heating season and have it cleaned as required. Unusually high concentrations of chimney deposits could mean your fireplace or wood stove is not burning efficiently and should be inspected for defects. If you use a wood stove, have the flue and chimney connection inspected and cleaned regularly. To prevent roof fires, consider installing a spark arrester on top of any

chimney that vents a solid-fuel stove or fireplace.

Space heaters

Give space heaters space. Keep all combustible materials away from portable and space heaters. Place all space heaters at least three feet from furniture, walls, curtains or anything else that could catch fire. Turn off space heaters when you leave home or go to bed.

Liquid fuel safety

If your space heater burns liquid fuel such as kerosene, let the heater cool down before refueling it. Adding fuel to a hot heater can cause fumes to ignite. Always refuel your heater outdoors in an area away from structures where a spill won't present a fire hazard. Use only the type of fuel recommended by the manufacturer. Never use a substitute or a lower-grade fuel. Never put gasoline in any space heater. Buy a fuel container for the space heater fuel that allows for safe storage of the fuel, and store it in a garage or shed, not in the living area of your home.

Natural gas heaters

Check vents periodically to make sure they aren't blocked. Never install unvented heaters in bathrooms or sleeping areas. Carbon monoxide can build up to dangerous levels in small, enclosed spaces.

Central heating systems

Statistically, central heating systems are less likely than portable or space heaters to cause home fires, but neglect can increase the risk to your safety. Never store combustible materials near a furnace and be sure that installation and automatic shut-off systems conform to local fire safety codes and are good working order. Have your furnace inspected and serviced if needed, yearly by a qualified professional. This checkup can prevent the possibility of carbon monoxide poisoning.

For more information, check with post regulation 420-90 for additional code requirements or call the Fort Sill Fire Prevention Office at 442-5911.

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