



178-180 Center Street

Wallingford, CT

www.monitorcontrols.com

Toll Free 888.269.3591 ~Fax 203.294.0811

The Dispatch

September, October, November 2005

The History Behind Fire Prevention Week

Each year, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) remembers that Chicago Fire during Fire Prevention Week. This years Fire Prevention Week is from October 9 through October 15.

In 1871, Chicago was one of the fastest growing cities in America, and because of this, construction standards had been "loose". Miles of rickety wooden buildings made for dangerous fuel in the event of a fire.

In fact, fire did break out in the O'Leary home on the west side of Chicago. The legend is that the Great Chicago Fire was started by a cow that belonged to Catherine O'Leary . She supposedly left a kerosene lantern in the barn after leaving her evening milking and a cow kicked it over and ignited the hay on the floor. While no proof of this story has ever been offered, the legend took hold in

Chicago and was told around the world. Regardless of how the fire started though, on Sunday evening, October 8, 1871, Chicago became a city in flames.

By 10:30 that evening, it was reported that the fire was out of control. A strong dry wind made matters even worse, blowing the fire toward the very heart of the city. In just over an hour, the west side of the city was in ashes and the fire showed no signs of slowing down. It hungrily jumped the Chicago River and pushed toward the center of the city. Soon the inferno became impossible to battle with more than a dozen different locations burning at once.

The flames were not the only thing that the residents of the city had to worry about either. In the early hours of the fire, looting and violence had broken out in the city. Saloon keepers, hoping that it might prevent their taverns from being destroyed, had rolled barrels of whiskey out into the streets. Soon men and women were staggering in the streets, thoroughly intoxicated. The drunks and looters did not comprehend the danger they were in.

Thankfully the fire began to die on the morning of October 10, when steady and soaking rains began to fall on the city. Over 300 people were dead and another 100,000 were without homes. The fire had cut a swath through the city that was four miles long and about two-thirds of a mile wide. Over \$200 million in property had been destroyed.

Within days of the fire, rebuilding began on a grand scale. The vigor of the city's rebirth amazed the rest of the nation and within three years, it once again dominated the western United States.

References: http://www.prairieghosts.com/great_fire.html



Building/Buying A New House... This May Affect You!

HB-6894, an act concerning carbon monoxide detectors was approved by the state senate and signed by the governor. This bill requires the installation of carbon monoxide detectors in new residential buildings. This bill requires one- and two-family dwellings to be equipped with carbon monoxide detectors and warning equipment complying with the state fire safety code if they are issued a permit for new occupancy after 9/30/05. The bill prohibits the issuance of a certificate of occupancy to any non-



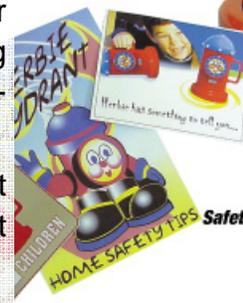
building issued a permit for new occupancy after 9/30/05 unless the local fire marshal or building official certifies that the building is equipped with carbon monoxide detection and warning equipment complying with the fire safety. Because you may not live in a new home is no reason to suspect a carbon monoxide problem couldn't arise. Monitor Controls, Inc. has available stock of units compatible with all of our existing systems.

Life-saving Toy!

With October being fire safety month, we are always looking for new ways to protect you, and especially your children. With Christmas also coming right around the corner, the **Herbie Hydrant** would be the perfect gift for any child. This is just about the only gift you can give a child that you hope he/she never uses. The Herbie Hydrant is a cute fire hydrant with a glow in the dark clock on the front and easy-to-hold handle on the side. It stands about 9" tall.

In case of fire, power loss, home intrusion or natural disaster the child lifts Herbie. While the top becomes a flashlight for your child, Herbie emits strobe lights and an audible siren so that fire/safety personnel can find your little one. A safety compartment holds medical information while the built-in timer allows fire personnel to determine how long your child has been exposed to fire conditions.

Herbie can be purchased by contacting us at www.monitorcontrols.com or calling us at 888.269.3591.

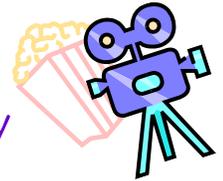


Safety Tips Booklet , Door Decal and Fire Chief Postcard Included



Feature Employee

Elaine Bartholomew



In an effort to introduce our staff to our clientele in a more personal way, we have been featuring a special employee in each newsletter. The employee must be nominated by co-workers in order to receive this honor. Our "Feature Employee" this quarter is Elaine Bartholomew!

Elaine is celebrating her 20th year with Monitor Controls, Inc. "I have learned a lot from the Yusza family. It is so great to work with such a great group of people, personally and professionally." says Elaine.

Elaine started her new position as assistant to the service department on September 1st, 2005. She is very excited about the new position and is looking forward to the future and the challenges her new position will bring.

When Elaine is not working, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends. She and her husband have two sons ages 19 and 8. Elaine says that having two boys is a learning experience and lots of fun.

Elaine's interests are reading, the outdoors, scrap-booking and animals.

Congratulations Elaine on your recent accomplishments and best wishes in attaining your future goals! We are happy to be working by your side!

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ICE Your Cell Phone!

Connecticut residents are urged to "ICE" their cell phones by storing the phone numbers of family members or friends to be notified "In Case of Emergency" (ICE).

The idea is to have readily available emergency contact numbers stored in one's cell phone contacts under the listing "ICE", so that, in the event of an emergency, paramedics or other emergency responders would be able to reach a family member or other listed ICE contact. It only takes a minute and can prove extremely valuable and save a great deal of time in the event of an auto accident, health emergency, natural disaster or a terrorist attack.

ICE was conceived by a British ambulance service leader earlier this year and it has been widely publicized throughout Europe and elsewhere.



Happy Birthday!



- John III 9/3
- Paula 9/21
- Rik 9/22
- Elaine 9/29
- Deb B. 11/29
- Kamal 11/30
- Sheena 11/30

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

★ Thank you to all employees celebrating ★
 ★ anniversaries with Monitor Controls! ★



| | | |
|-----------|----------|---|
| John III | 23 years | ★ |
| Debbie S. | 19 years | ★ |
| Steve | 19 years | ★ |
| Ray | 9 years | ★ |
| Kamal | 7 years | ★ |
| Paula | 2 years | ★ |
| Kimberly | 2 years | ★ |
| Barbara | 2 years | ★ |

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FRAUD!

Credit Card Skimming

FRAUD!

With the holidays come family, presents and FRAUD

Credit cards are used the most during these upcoming months because of Thanksgiving, and Christmas shopping. With the holidays come family time, buying presents, going out to dinner and frauds. If you bring your family out to a thanksgiving or Christmas dinner and hand the waitress a credit card when you get the check, you may be paying much more than just the bill. Your credit card may be getting skimmed.

What is it?

An electronic credit card reader, or "skimmer," is a device that was designed to be used with cash registers and/or credit card machines. The skimmer gathers information including your name, address, telephone number, card number, credit limit and PIN number - which is encoded in the magnetic strip on the back of your card. When used legitimately, this information is collected and telephoned in for approval. When used illegitimately, the process is called "skimming." According to the U.S. Secret Service, skimming is one of the fastest growing ploys used by criminals.

How does it work?

During the skimming process your card is swiped a second time, using a small, hand-held device. The skimmer captures your information and re-encodes it on the magnetic strip of a plain plastic card or stores the information in the device itself so it can be downloaded later for illegal purposes. With one swipe of your card a criminal can take the information he or she has captured and make unauthorized purchases. Ten years ago, skimming was much less common. Skimmers were too bulky to carry around and had to be hidden under counters. Smaller skimmers, roughly the size of a pager, hit the scene two or three years ago. These skimmers are easy to carry, easy to hide and easy to buy. Everything needed to pull off this crime is available on the Internet. A skimmer costs about \$300, and the equipment to make a counterfeit credit card costs about \$5,000 to \$10,000. If all this weren't bad enough, there's another kind of skimming going on as well. A thief slips a small, skimming bug into an older credit card terminal. The bug pulls credit card data from the terminal. A few days later the thief removes the bug.



Who does it?

Frequently, individuals doing the skimming are employees of the establishment - often gas stations or restaurants. They will pull the small skimming device out of their pocket, swipe your card and hide it before anyone realizes what has happened. If they don't use the information themselves, they are often paid a flat fee, or paid on a per-card basis, for the information they steal.

What is being done to fight skimming?

For one thing, newer credit card terminals can't be bugged. And portable terminals, which would enable a waiter to swipe a credit card at a customer's table, are available, although not widespread.

The U.S. Secret Service is working with the credit card industry to track down skimming rings by assembling a database of locations where scams have occurred.

As with any kind of credit card fraud, a consumer victim is not on the hook for the bill. Someone living in San Diego won't have to pay for a thief's \$5,000 shopping spree in Hong Kong with a counterfeit credit card. Although banks and credit card companies will generally absorb the losses generated by skimming, they usually offset these costs by increasing your interest rates and fees. Be aware of the potential for this type of fraud.

What can you do?

The hardest part for a fraud victim is straightening out their credit report after a thief piles up charges in their name. It can take months to sort out. That's why it's so important to monitor credit card bills carefully and report any suspicious activity immediately. Look at credit card bills line by line. If something looks suspicious, you can catch it before it gets out of control.

It's also important to guard your credit card number. Be sure to shred old receipts and credit card bills.

Keep a close eye on your credit card when paying in a store, restaurant or gas station.

What to do if you become a victim?

- Contact the [three major credit bureaus](#). [Equifax](#): (800) 525-6285; [Experian](#): (888) 397-3742; and [Trans Union](#): (800) 680-7289.
- Contact creditors for any accounts that have been tampered with or opened without your knowledge. Be sure to put complaints in writing.
- [Contact the FTC](#): (877) 438-4338.