



# HALESITE F. D. NEWS



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As we return to our normal routines following Hurricane Sandy and the subsequent Nor'easter, I thought you'd like to know how your fire department performed during these two major storms.

On Sunday, October 28th, we spent the day setting up cots and furniture in the firehouse for potentially displaced citizens and making sure all equipment—including our many chain saws—were operational. We held a drill on Sunday morning for all firefighters to review safety procedures when clearing roads of downed trees and how to work around power lines.

When the first rain drops started to fall on Monday, dozens of firefighters and EMT's gathered at the firehouse, anticipating a very busy night. What many people forget is that these men and women are volunteers; people who could be home looking after their own families and property, but instead commit themselves to the protection of our community.

During the height of Sandy's fury, when the wind and driving rain brought down so many of Huntington's grand trees, firefighters were out trying to keep the roads clear so that our equipment could respond to the many calls. Our Department's tall, small wheel-based mini-pumper, which was added to Halesite's arsenal last summer, was an important asset because it allowed firefighters to access narrow streets, steep driveways and flooded roads.

As Monday afternoon turned into evening, the frequency of calls began to rise. Ten calls became twenty. Twenty calls became thirty and so on. At some points during the storm multiple Department trucks were literally just going from one call directly to another. By midnight Monday, as Huntington Harbor began lapping at Halesite's garage doors, we had already responded to 72 incidents, most involving downed trees and wires.

In one of the storm's many unexpected turns, the moon tide on Tuesday failed to flood the firehouse. Original expectations suggested that two to three feet of water would come into the building as the height of Hurricane Sandy hit precisely at the astrological high tide. A slightly faster moving storm coupled with a last minute shift in wind from east to west, however, pushed the water back into the parking lot and ultimately back into the harbor.

While the majority of Halesite's calls involved clearing the roads of downed trees, some were even more urgent. Two ambulance calls, a cardiac arrest at 2 AM Tuesday morning and a mutual aid maternity call later in the week, demonstrated the importance of keeping the roads clear. Had firefighters not been out all night chain-sawing pathways through the streets, the ambulance would have been unable to get from the patients' homes to Huntington Hospital. During the storms Halesite was also called to two other mutual aid alarms – a stand-by for a helicopter landing when a Suffolk County Police Officer was struck by a hit and run driver on Greenlawn Road and a storm-related working fire in Centerport.

Throughout the two storms many displaced Huntington residents sought shelter at the Halesite firehouse. There, they found hot meals and friendly faces to lift their spirits. Dozens more stopped by just to charge their cell phones or catch up on the news. Although the firehouse, like most others, lost power on Monday and is not a designated shelter, its back-up generator provided uninterrupted electricity throughout the ordeal. We also opened our doors to many of the line workers who came from other states to assist in the power recovery.

During the roughly nine days that comprised both Hurricane Sandy and the Nor'easter, the volunteers of Halesite responded to a total of 142 incidents even though most of its members were still without power in their own homes. That's over nine times the usual volume of calls for Halesite. While a large volume, it's even more remarkable considering that Halesite's Fire District is only about 2.2 square miles in size.

With the holidays approaching and life slowly getting back to normal, I thought you would appreciate hearing how Halesite's volunteers performed during the storms. For my part, I was never so proud to be Chief of the Halesite Fire Department.

Best Wishes for a Safe and Happy Holiday Season,

Andy Magerle  
Chief of Department

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## **KNOW WHAT YOUR CO DETECTOR IS TELLING YOU**

The Halesite Fire Department responds to many calls for “CO Detector Activation”. In most cases the problem is with the detector, not because of Carbon Monoxide.

A chirp at 30 or 60 second intervals means the battery needs to be replaced or the detector is malfunctioning. A **constant** tone is a CO warning. If this **constant** tone sounds, move to fresh air and call the fire department.

CO is a byproduct of incomplete combustion, most commonly from furnaces, water heaters, stoves, portable heaters, portable generators, and vehicles.

Detectors with digital displays are preferred, because they not only provide a reading of the CO level, they also display a low battery or error message. Test the detector monthly and replace batteries each spring and fall. The shelf life of a detector (manufacture date is often shown on the detector) is from two to five years, so replace your detector according to manufacturer’s instructions.

## **IS YOUR HOUSE NUMBER VISIBLE?**

In a fire or medical emergency, seconds count. To avoid delaying responders, make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street both day and night. Use reflective numbers that are at least 4” high and place them where they are not hidden by foliage, open doors, or vehicles. In addition to a number on your house, a curbside number is also helpful to responders.



## **KEEP HYDRANTS CLEAR**



Please do your part to keep hydrants visible. We place winter flags on them to aid in locating them. Please shovel or sweep snow away from hydrants and do not leave trash, debris, or cars in front of them. We hope we will not need to use them; but you want them to be clearly visible, if we do.

## **HFD WEB SITE**

For more safety tips, as well for news about Halesite Fire Department members, activities, events, and recruitment, visit our new web site:

[www.halesitefd.org](http://www.halesitefd.org)

You can also sign up for e-mail messages and newsletters from the Halesite F.D. Just enter your e-mail address at the lower right corner of our home page.

## **SAVE THE DATES**

### **December**

- 7-9 Annual Christmas Tree Sale
- 9 Annual Holiday Party for Children in the Fire District

### **January**

- 4 Blood Drive

### **February**

- 3 Pancake Breakfast

**FOR FIRE OR MEDICAL  
EMERGENCY, DIAL**

**427-7250**

**FOR POLICE EMERGENCY  
DIAL 911**