Do you want to ring in 2016 with a resolution that really matters? Resolve to get serious about fire safety.

Fire fascinates. As a crackling campfire or a cheerful blaze in a fireplace, it offers heat, light, comfort and a flickering beauty that draws the eye. It can also kill in minutes. In fact, a small fire can become a life-threatening inferno in just two minutes; in five minutes, it can engulf an entire house, spewing toxic gases and searing heat. Annually, house fires cause more than $7 billion in property damage in the United States, according to Ready.gov. Worse, they claim some 2,500 lives and injure more than 12,500 people each year. How can you protect your loved ones?

GET ALARMED
The American Red Cross reports that 60 percent of fire deaths occur in homes that do not have working smoke alarms. Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and in each bedroom. Test them once a month and install fresh batteries as needed.

HAVE AN ESCAPE PLAN
Fire moves with incredible speed, so every second counts. Create a plan that details how everyone in the home will escape if there is a fire. Conduct fire drills with the members of your household at least twice a year.

APPLY YOURSELF TO ELECTRICAL SAFETY
Electrical appliance are fantastic convenience, but they can also ignite fires. Fortunately, there are danger signs that can help you spot potential problems before a fire starts.

• Pay attention to flickering lights, loose outlets, unusual heat, scorch marks & fuses that blow frequently. These issues suggest an electrical problem.
• Be on the lookout for electrical cords that are frayed. Never run one under a carpet or in a place where people are likely to trip over it.
• Avoid overloading an electrical outlet.
• Keep electrical appliances in good shape. When they are worn out, replace them.
• Do not get electrical appliances wet.

BE SMART WHEN USING CANDLES
If you enjoy using candles, use a proper candleholder and place the candle on a heat-resistant surface. Make sure that it is an appropriate distance away from anything flammable. Avoid putting a candle in a place where children or pets might reach it or knock it over. Never move a lit candle or leave one unattended.

COOK UP SOME KITCHEN SAFETY
More than 50 percent of accidental house fires begin in the kitchen. To stay safe, stay on task and keep safety in mind while you are cooking. Do not leave a hot pot unattended. Avoid wearing loose clothing and keep hot mitts away from the burners. Do not cook after drinking alcohol or taking medicines that make you drowsy.

GET OTHERS FIRED UP ABOUT SAFETY
Educate yourself about fire safety and share what you learn with the people you love. If you have children, involve them in your family’s fire drills, teach them about fire safety and show them that it is important by modeling good behavior.

If a fire strikes your residential property, you are likely to find yourself faced with fire, smoke and water damage, but you do not have to deal with it alone. At SERVPRO, we’re restoration professionals. We’ll assess the situation and limit further damage by placing protective tarps and boarding up impacted areas. We can also address any water damage, remove smoke and soot, clean and sanitize your space, and complete the restoration process so that things can get back to normal for your family. With our dedication, expertise and professional equipment, you’ll see excellent results quickly. Contact SERVPRO today to learn more about our fire damage restoration services.