

Westlake Fire Department News

Travis County Emergency Services District No. 9

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Did You Know...?

- The Westlake FD is one of a handful of departments in central Texas that have firefighters trained to deliver Advanced Life Support interventions in medical emergencies.
- As of 2014, sixteen of the current thirty-four Westlake firefighters were once volunteers for WFD(47%). Fifteen others have hired on to work for the Austin Fire Department and two former firefighters have gone on to become doctors.

Serving the cities
of West Lake Hills and
Rollingwood and
surrounding Travis
County since 1962

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WUI—A Threat to Westbank Homes

The Westbank area and western Travis County have long been recognized as a high hazard Wildland Urban Interface Zone where development and wildland fuels meet. In 1961 there was a large wildland fire that burned over 4,000 acres between St. Stephen's School Rd and the High Road. In 2011, the Pedernales, Steiner Ranch and Bastrop Complex (Labor Day) fires reminded us that our own area can burn when the right conditions are present - pre-existing drought, high winds, low humidity and an ignition source.

If you are planning to remodel build a new home, follow the Wildland Urban Interface Fire Code and use ignition-resistant construction materials designed to reduce the effect of flying embers. We can help you identify those materials.

Create a defensible space around your home. You don't have to cut down all the vegetation on your property! Just reduce the continuous fuel within 30 feet of your house, or 90 feet if your home is on a steep slope. If the tops of the trees on your property are touching, trim them in such a way that they are no longer acting as a fuse toward your home. Call us and we will help you plan!

Summer Safety—Prevent Drownings!



Practice Supervision

- Never take your eyes off children in the water— not for a minute! Always designate a “pool watcher.”

Install Barriers

- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission strongly recommends that all residential pools have a 4-foot barrier, such as a fence with self-closing and self-latching gates. If the house is the fourth side of a barrier, secure doors with alarms that

prevent children from wandering into the pool area.

Avoid Entrapments

- Suction from a pool or spa's drain can be so powerful it can trap an adult underwater. Do not use a pool or spa if there are broken or missing drain covers.
- Ask your pool operator if your pool or spa's drains are compliant with the Pool and Spa Safety Act.

Know Life-Saving Skills

- Teach your children how to swim
- Know CPR so you can help save a life if a water emergency happens
- Understand the basics of life-saving so you can assist in an emergency



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Meet a Westlake Firefight-

Firefighter of the Year—2013

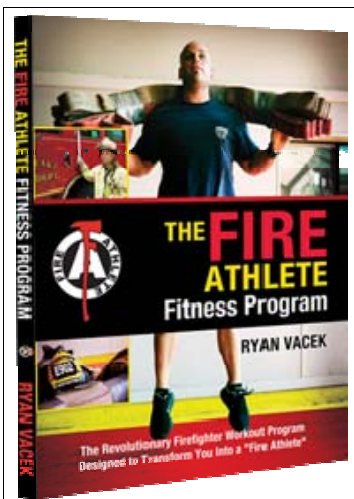
Jason Kepler

Firefighter Jason Kepler was awarded the Firefighter of the Year in January at the Annual Awards Banquet. Kepler, who has been with the Department for 10 years, is a leader and a motivator according to Fire Chief Mike Elliott “Jason is just a good influence on his crew. He provides leadership and is what I think is a good role model”. About a year ago, Kepler agreed to be a fitness trainer. Each shift spends an hour or so working out to make sure they can handle the demands of putting fires out. Jason’s shift is the oldest in the Department. “Not to throw anyone under the bus,” he joked. This year his A Shift made one of the best times in a fitness review of sit-ups, push ups and running.

**“TO PRESERVE LIFE
AND PROPERTY.”**

**We’re on the web!
www.westlakefd.org**

WFD Strives for Firefighter Athlete Status



Westlake firefighters are getting more physically fit than ever as they strive to become “firefighter athletes”. The Firefighter athlete initiative refers to a physical training program that focuses on the actual tasks and equipment found at a typical fire emergency and translates them into a rigorous boot camp-like discipline for fitness.

Fire Athlete Fitness concept was designed by Lt. Ryan Vacek in 2006 as a way to help firefighters reach their fitness goals. The program quickly gained recognition from many Fire Department organizations as an effective way to get functionally fit and boost productivity on the fire-ground. Thousands of

firefighters have testified to the effectiveness of the Fire Athlete Fitness Program. After the creation of the Fire Athlete Fitness Program workout book, the experience has grown into a nationally recognized fitness phenomenon.

Ryan’s program has been so successful, he has since written a book on it.