

## Severe Winter Weather

During the winter months, fire hydrants may be covered due to heavy accumulations of snow. Add blowing winds to the mix and hydrants often become hidden.

If fire hydrants remain covered by snow, firefighting operations may become compromised. If fire and rescue units are unable to find or gain access to the hydrants, the potential loss of lives and property increase.



### How Can I Help?

Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue request the community's help to clear fire hydrants before fire and rescue has a need to use them. Below are steps you can take to assist in keeping your community safe:

- Shovel snow around the fire hydrants in your neighborhoods.
- Make sure the hydrant is uncovered and clear for access.

- Make sure the hydrant is visible.
  - Mark the snow and areas in front and around the hydrant with a bright colored paint, preferably orange or red that will be easily recognizable by fire and rescue units.



- Adopt your fire hydrant.

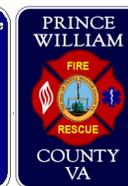
### Additional Safety Steps

- Make sure your address is visible.
  - First Responders use maps to get them to the area, but they need to be able to see house numbers to ensure they are at the correct location.
- Have at least two clear exits out of your house. When the snow melts and refreezes, it could prevent you from being able to open the door and exit from your house.
- Businesses are also reminded to clear the areas around emergency exits to ensure customers can exit safely in an emergency.

# FIRE HYDRANTS



**Keep It Clear:  
a Matter of Life  
or Death**



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## Parking Near a Hydrant

It is illegal to park a car within a certain distance of a fire hydrant. These distances vary throughout the U.S.; however, in Prince William County, the distance is 15 feet often indicated by yellow or red paint on the curb.



Additional items such as posts, fences, shrubbery and vegetative growth, trash, storage, and other materials or objects are also limited to a distance of 15 feet from a hydrant.

When firefighters arrive on the scene of a fire, they have only minutes, sometimes seconds, to protect life and property. It is very important that they have full unobstructed access to fire hydrants and connections. Hydrants need to be visible and accessible in an emergency, therefore, this law is enforced.

## Hydrant Colors



In the U.S., a hydrant's color is significant to fire and rescue personnel when fighting fires. Hydrant coloring may vary due to practical criteria which may affect the reliability of the water source for fighting fire.

Fire hydrants which are not suitable for firefighting purposes are painted differently. The hydrant's nozzle caps and top or bonnet, are coded according to their purpose.



Some fire hydrants are privately owned and maintained by someone other than the Service Authority. This coding aids firefighters in determining whether to call for additional resources, or find another hydrant during a fire.

## Opening a Hydrant

Opening a hydrant is illegal, wasteful and dangerous. Opening a hydrant without proper tools can cause damage to the hydrant making it inoperable. Illegally opened hydrants can lower water pressure impairing firefighters' efforts to extinguish fires.



Residents, especially children, are at serious risk when a hydrant is illegally opened. Often caught off guard, they may be knocked down by the water's powerful force causing serious injury.

