



Phillips County Emergency Management Newsletter

October 2026

Fire Prevention Week: 4-10 October 2026– Fire Tips

Check Smoke Alarms: Test every smoke alarm, Replace alarms that are 10 years old or older, Make sure there are alarms on every level, inside bedrooms, and outside sleeping areas.



Check Carbon Monoxide Alarms: Make sure they're located outside sleeping areas and on every level where appropriate.

Check Your Fire Extinguishers: Make sure they are accessible, properly mounted and not damaged, Check the gauge/indicator and expiration or service information.

Practice Your Escape Plan: Identify two ways out of every room when possible, Make sure doors and windows open, Establish an outside meeting place.

Look Around for Electrical Hazards: Check for frayed or damaged cords, Don't overload outlets, Replace damaged extension cords, Keep electrical equipment away from water.

Make Your Kitchen Safer: Never leave cooking unattended, Keep towels, paper products, curtains and other combustibles away from the stove, Have a lid nearby for a small grease/pan fire, **Never put water on a grease fire.**

Prepare for Heating Season: Since October is also when people start firing up heaters and woodstoves: Have furnaces and heating equipment inspected, Clean chimneys and woodstoves as needed, Keep combustibles at least 3 feet from heating equipment, Make sure portable heaters are on a hard, level surface and plugged directly into a wall outlet.



Your combine is not a toaster. If it's full of chaff, dust and dry crop residue, cleaning it once in a while is probably a good idea.

If your equipment is smoking, that's not a new feature. Shut it down and figure out why.

That funny electrical smell? It's probably not "just how tractors smell."

Don't climb on moving equipment. You have a tractor, not a rodeo bull.

Tell someone where you're working. "Somewhere out by the back forty" is not a GPS coordinate.

If it's smoking and it shouldn't be smoking... congratulations, you found a problem."



Check Your Farm & Equipment

- Remove accumulated chaff, dust and debris from combines, tractors and equipment.
- Check wiring and batteries for damage.
- Clean around engines and exhaust components.
- Make sure extinguishers are mounted and accessible in equipment.
- Don't ignore overheating equipment or unusual electrical smells.
- Keep hay, combustibles and fuel appropriately separated from ignition sources.

Slow down around grain bins, augers and PTOs. The equipment has no feelings about how important you are.

What to do if you're targeted or scammed.

Stop communication
Save evidence
Contact your financial institution
Report the scam

You have the best shot at getting money back if you collect evidence. Take screenshots and document all your communication. This includes:

Emails, Messages,
Usernames, Phone numbers, and
Payment records



Online Dating and Romance Scams: How to Protect Your Heart and Your Money

Dating apps, social media, and messaging platforms help millions of people build meaningful relationships. Unfortunately, scammers are single and ready to mingle – they go where people are, and that includes [dating platforms](#).

Romance scams, sometimes called sweetheart scams, are one of the most financially and emotionally damaging types of online fraud. Scammers exploit trust, affection, and loneliness to steal money and personal information.

True love should not require a gift card

What is a romance scam?

A romance scam happens when a criminal creates a fake online identity to form a romantic relationship with someone. Their goal isn't love – it's money or personal information.

A common scammer playbook includes: Building trust over days, weeks, or months, Pretending to share deep feelings, Creating believable stories about their life and hardships, Eventually asking for money, gifts, or financial help

Once money is sent, it's usually gone for good.

Warning Signs:

Your password is not a love language.

They ask for money. They may claim it's for: medical emergencies, travel costs to visit you, business problems, and military deployment needs Our recommendation? Never, ever send money to someone you haven't met in person.

They request hard-to-trace payments. Scammers will ask for money in ways that seem sort of odd, like: Gift cards, Cryptocurrency, Wire transfers, Payment apps. This is because these payment methods are difficult to reverse or track.

They say they live far away. Romance scammers often claim that they are: working overseas, on an oil rig, or traveling for business. Distance gives them an excuse to avoid meeting.

How to protect yourself from romance scams

Share with care. Think about what you post publicly. Personal details can help scammers target and manipulate you.

Always check your privacy settings. Set social media profiles and dating services to private when possible to limit unwanted contact.

Use reverse image search. Search a profile photo to see if it appears elsewhere online. If the same image is tied to different names, it's likely a scam. However, with AI, it is easy to create a believable fake profile photo in seconds as well so be careful.

Be cautious with personal information. Protect your personal info like cash! Never share: Financial details, home address, ID numbers, and workplace information