

Careless Smoking

When a member of your community is killed in a home fire, it is important to let others know how they can prevent a similar tragedy. As you continue to report on the fire, the U.S. Fire Administration encourages you to remind your audience that many fire deaths and injuries are preventable.

More than 4,000 Americans die each year in fires and more than 20,000 are injured. Many of them might be alive today if they had only had the information they needed to avoid a disaster. The following life-saving tips could make a big difference to your audience. By incorporating them in your story now, while the moment is still fresh, you could help save a life.

Did you know?

- Eighty-two percent of all fire deaths occur in the home.
- Careless smoking is the second leading cause of fire deaths.
- Deaths due to fires caused by careless smoking are particularly preventable.
- Having a working smoke alarm reduces one's chance of dying in a fire by nearly a half.

Following these simple fire safety tips can boost survival rates dramatically. Please share them with your readers because knowledge is the best fire protection.

Careless Smoking Life-Saving Tips

- Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Test smoke alarm batteries every month and change them at least once a year. Consider installing a 10-year lithium battery-powered smoke alarm, which is sealed so it cannot be tampered with or opened.
- Never smoke in bed. Replace mattresses made prior to the 2007 Federal Mattress Flammability Standard.
- Don't put ashtrays on the arms of sofas or chairs.
- Use deep ashtrays and soak ashes in water before disposal.
- Don't leave cigarettes, cigars or pipes unattended. Put out all smoking materials before you walk away.
- If you begin to feel drowsy while watching television or reading, extinguish your cigarette or cigar.
- Close a matchbook before striking and hold it away from your body. Set your cigarette lighter on "low" flame.
- If smokers have visited, be sure to check the floor and around chair cushions for ashes that may have been dropped accidentally.
- Develop and practice a fire escape plan. In case of a fire, crawl or stay low to the ground, beneath the smoke, and use the escape plan you have worked out. Get out and stay out.

For more information on the U.S. Fire Administration's Public Education Campaigns or to speak with a USFA spokesperson, please call 202-842-3600. Also

visit <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/> or <http://www.firesafety.gov/> for additional information on fire safety.