

Smoke Alarms

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.
- Having a working smoke alarm reduces one's chance of dying in a fire by nearly one-half.
- Nearly one-third of the residential fires and two-fifths of residential fire fatalities occur in homes with no smoke alarms.

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

Smoke Alarms Life-Saving Tips

- Place a smoke alarm on every level of your home and outside bedrooms. If you keep your bedroom doors closed, place a smoke alarm in each bedroom.
- Check smoke alarms monthly by pushing the test button. If you cannot reach the button easily, use a broom handle.
- Change the batteries in your alarms at least once a year - perhaps when you change your clocks for Daylight Savings Time.
- Teach children what the smoke alarm sounds like and what to do - leave the building immediately by crawling low under the smoke - when they hear it sound.
- If cooking smoke sets off the alarm, do not disable it. Turn on the range fan, open a window or wave a towel near the alarm.
- Do not remove the batteries to put in other appliances such as personal stereos or games.
- Smoke alarms wear out over time. Replace yours if it is 10 years old or more.
- Keep smoke alarms clean. Dust and debris can interfere with their operation. Vacuum over and around your smoke alarm regularly.
- Consider installing a 10-year lithium battery-powered smoke alarm, which is sealed so it cannot be tampered with or opened.
- Hard-wired smoke alarms with battery back-ups need to be tested monthly and batteries replaced yearly.

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.