



A safe home is in your hands.

## **Fire Safety: Be Proactive to Reduce Fire-Related Injury and Death**

Are you doing enough to prevent a home fire? Despite a recent study revealing that 97 percent of households have installed smoke alarms, home fires continue to be the third leading cause of unintentional home injury-related deaths.

According to the Home Safety Council's *State of Home Safety in America™* report, although the majority of Americans report having smoke alarms installed within their homes, only 20 percent actually test their smoke alarms on a regular basis. Additional research also shows that more than half of American families (64%) polled have *never* planned or practiced a fire escape plan.

"The fact that fire and burns continue to be a leading cause of home injury death is a clear sign that Americans need to take a more proactive role in their own safety," said Meri-K Appy, president of the Home Safety Council. "If you don't have working smoke alarms on every level of your home and a well rehearsed fire escape plan, you are exposing your entire household to an increased risk of fire and fire injury."

To reduce fire-related injuries, the Home Safety Council suggests a two-pronged approach: First, install and test smoke alarms, and then create a fire escape plan for your household. Recommended guidelines are as follows:

### **Installing and Testing Smoke Alarms**

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement and in or near all sleeping areas.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month, as well as upon return from an extended vacation or trip. Replace the batteries at least once a year.
- Never disable smoke alarms; even temporarily - you may forget to replace the battery.
- Smoke alarms don't last forever; replace once every ten years.
- Consider installing an automatic home fire sprinkling system. While smoke alarms provide early warning of the fire, sprinklers immediately suppress and even extinguish the fire, often before the fire department arrives.

### **Creating a Fire Escape Plan**

- Gather the entire household and devise a plan. Investigate all possible exits and escape routes, checking for possible obstacles and identifying any need for ladders. Verify the working operation of all locks.
- Practice your plan with the entire family at least twice each year. Practice your escape during the day and night so everyone can be prepared.
- Select an outside location (such as a neighbor's house or mailbox) a safe distance from your home as a spot for a post-escape meeting.
- Assign caregivers to assist any persons with special needs, such as children, older adults, or those with mobility limitations, in the event of a real emergency.
- Once out, stay out. Under no circumstances should anyone re-enter a burning building.

Take steps now to prevent tragedy later. To learn more about fire prevention visit [www.homesafetycouncil.org](http://www.homesafetycouncil.org).