

Resource Document

2014 Winter Safety Campaign

Preventing home fires

Narrative:

Kitchen fires are the leading cause of residential fires.

Failure to practice or implement an escape plan is often the cause of injury or death of occupants seeking to vacate burning buildings.

Smoke inhalation is more of a threat than the actual fire. Deaths often result from an individual's inability to find his/her way out through dark and smoke-filled rooms and eventually succumb to smoke inhalation, or carbon monoxide poisoning.

Key messages:

Don't be complacent about your family's safety.

Establish and practice escape plans in the event of an emergency, especially with children. Plans should include what to do in the event of a fire, i.e. evacuation routes, safe meeting place away from the burning building, emergency notification procedures, etc. Note: In a two-story structure, such a plan would include practicing window exits via escape ladders.

Regularly test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure they're functioning correctly and individuals can become familiar with the alarms.

Talking Points:

Establishing and practicing an escape plan in the event of a fire is especially critical for younger members of the family. Children often become frightened and tend to hide under beds, closets, etc. to escape fire or smoke. This makes it especially difficult for firefighters to locate and rescue them.

Carbon monoxide poisoning, rather than burning, often is the cause of death during a residential fire.

Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors should be checked regularly to ensure they're functioning properly and so occupants become familiar with the alarms.

Designate and practice evacuating to a meeting place away from the fire threat. This makes it easier for first responders to account for all residential occupants.

Statistics:

According to Federal Emergency Management Agency statistics, annually an estimated 364,500 residential fires account for 2,450 deaths and 13,900 injuries.

Property damages as a result of these fires cost homeowners nearly \$6.7 billion each year.

Having a working smoke detector more than doubles one's chances of surviving a fire. (U.S. Fire Administration)

Eighty-four percent of all fire deaths occur in the home. (U.S. Fire Administration)

Resources:

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): www.fema.gov

National Fire Protection Association: www.nfpa.org/education

National Safety Council: www.nsc.gov

U.S. Fire Administration: www.usfa.fema.gov