

FIRE SAFETY

Tips To Prevent Home Fires

(NAPSA)—Keeping the home fires burning may be a nice title for a song, but it can also be a frightening statistic. Take the time to give your home a fire safety makeover.

According to the American Red Cross, four out of five Americans don't realize that home fires are the single most common disaster across the nation, and only 26 percent of families have actually developed and practiced a home fire escape plan.

"Preparing for a home fire doesn't require a lot of expensive equipment or training," said Red Cross fire expert Heidi Taylor. "To stay safe, families need to develop a fire escape plan and take steps towards fire prevention."

Fire Prevention Tips

The American Red Cross offers these simple steps to prevent a fire in your home:

- Keep all sources of fuel (paper, clothing, bedding, and carpets or rugs) at least three feet away from all heat sources.
- Provide constant adult supervision during cooking or in rooms with lit candles or fires. Do not leave burning candles unattended.
- Keep matches and lighters away from and out of reach of children.
- Teach young children to tell an adult if they see matches and lighters and not to touch them.

Fire Preparedness Tips

- Install a smoke alarm outside each sleeping area and on each additional level of your home. If people sleep with doors closed, install smoke alarms in-



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side sleeping areas. Replace all batteries at least once a year. Smoke alarms become less sensitive over time, so replace your smoke alarm every 10 years.

- Consider having one or more working fire extinguishers in your home. Get training from the fire department in the proper use of your extinguishers.

- Create a plan. Determine at least two ways to escape from every room of your home. Consider escape ladders for sleeping areas on the second or third floors.

- Select a location outside your home where everyone would meet after escaping.

- Practice your escape plan at least twice a year and revise it as necessary.

Remember, once you are out, stay out! Call the fire department from a neighbor's home.

Last year, the Red Cross responded to 67,000 fires by providing immediate emergency assistance to fire victims. For more tips on fire safety, visit www.redcross.org or contact your local chapter.