

FASNY: Learn the sounds of fire safety

Knowing these sounds can save you time – and your life – in an emergency

Guest Editorial by The Firemen's Association of the State of New York

Do you know what a continuous set of three loud beeps from your fire alarm means? How about four? Knowing the difference between these sounds can save you, your home and your family. Instead of taking immediate action in an emergency situation, many people waste time trying to figure out what the sounds mean instead of calling for help. Time is a valuable asset during a crisis and can mean the difference between life and death.

In support of this year's Fire Prevention Week theme ("Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety"), The Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY) wants to educate New Yorkers on the different sounds their home alarms make and how they should respond.

"Our lives and our homes are filled with technologies that use all kinds of sounds to help us. Sometimes all the beeps and chirps can just become white noise," said John Farrell, president of the Firemen's Association of the State of New York. "The sounds of our smoke and carbon monoxide alarms can help save lives or warn us when our lifesaving devices are starting to reach the end of their useful life. It is important that all New Yorkers know the 'Sounds of Fire Safety' and make the proper response when they hear them."

Many residents remove the batteries from their alarms

when they begin to chirp and end up forgetting to replace them. Others may think the sounds are a result of a defect. Unfortunately, by not investigating the situation further, it could present serious risks in the case of a fire or emergency situation. According to the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA), three out of every five home fire deaths occur in homes without working smoke alarms or in homes lacking smoke detectors. And a quarter of all smoke alarm failures are caused by dead batteries.

Working smoke alarms save lives by cutting the risk of dying in a home fire in half. Smoke alarms should be installed and maintained in every dwelling.

Smoke Alarm Safety Tips from NFPA

- Know the difference between the sounds of your alarms:

- ✓ Smoke alarms: three beeps.
- ✓ Carbon monoxide alarms: four beeps.

- When a smoke or carbon monoxide alarm sounds, respond immediately by first exiting your home, calling 911, and staying out of your home.

- Test your smoke alarms monthly by holding down the test button.

- If your smoke alarm begins to chirp – typically a single chirp every 30 or 60 seconds – it means the batteries are low and should be replaced.

- ✓ If your smoke alarm continues chirping after batteries are replaced, it means the alarm is

at the end of its life and the unit must be replaced.

- Regularly replace your alarm's batteries once a year.

- ✓ If your smoke alarm is more than 10 years old, it is time to replace the alarm.

- Since 2019, New York state law requires all new or replacement smoke alarms in New York to be powered by a 10-year, sealed, nonremovable battery, or hardwired to the home.

- ✓ Ten-year fire alarms still need to be tested monthly, and replaced every 10 years.

- ✓ Ten-year fire alarms will chirp when their battery is low.

- Make sure your smoke and CO alarms meet the needs of all your family members, including those with sensory or physical disabilities.

- ✓ If there is someone in your household who is deaf or hard of hearing, install a bed shaker and strobe light alarms that will alert that person to fire.

- Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home for the best protection. When one sounds, they all sound. Make sure you can hear the

sound of the smoke alarm.

For more information on smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, and other information on fire safety and prevention, visit www.fasny.com and www.nfpa.org.

Founded in 1872, the Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY) represents the interests of the more than 85,000 volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel in New York state. For more information, visit www.fasny.com.



Fire Prevention Week: Test smoke alarms now before cold weather

Red Cross responds to 27% more US home fires a month in winter than in warmer seasons

Guest Editorial by the American Red Cross of Western New York

This Fire Prevention Week (Oct. 3-9), the American Red Cross of Western New York urges you to test your smoke alarms before the threat of home fires increases with cold weather.

The Red Cross responds to 27% more home fires in November-March than in warmer months. According to the National Fire Protection Association – which is sponsoring Fire Prevention Week with the theme, "Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety" – home fires are most common in cooler months when people spend more time inside, and cooking and heating equipment are the leading causes of these crises.

"Every day, people's lives are devastated by home fires – a threat that's increasing as winter approaches," said Ken Turner, chief regional disaster officer of the American Red Cross of WNY. "Help keep your family safe now by testing your smoke alarms and practicing your two-minute fire escape drill."

How To Protect Your Family

During Fire Prevention Week, test your smoke alarms and practice your two-minute home fire escape drill – the amount of time experts say you may have to get out before it's too late. Teach children what a smoke alarm sounds like and talk about fire safety and what to do in an emergency. Visit

redcross.org/fire for more information.

- ✓ Place smoke alarms on each level of your home, including inside and outside bedrooms and sleeping areas. Test alarms monthly and change the batteries at least once a year, if your model requires it.

- ✓ Check the manufacturer's date of your smoke alarms. If they're 10 years or older, they likely need to be replaced because components such as batteries can become less reliable. Follow your alarm's manufacturer instructions.

- ✓ Include at least two ways to exit every room in your home in your escape plan.

- ✓ Select a meeting spot at a safe distance away from your home, such as your neighbor's home or landmark, like a specific tree in your front yard, where everyone knows to meet.

- ✓ Tailor your escape plan to everyone's needs in your household. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, install strobe light and bed-shaker alarms to help alert you to a fire. When practicing your plan, include any devices or people that can help you to get out safely.

If you cannot afford to purchase smoke alarms or are physically unable to install one, the Red Cross may be able to help. Contact your local Red Cross for help. Due to COVID-19 safety guidelines, smoke alarm installations are limited to where they're safe to do so.

Preparing Now Can Save Your Life

Since October 2014, the Red Cross Home Fire Campaign with community partners has saved at least 1,048 lives – including 43 in our region – by educating families about fire safety, helping them create escape plans and installing free smoke alarms in high-risk areas. In the past year, Red Cross volunteers and partners across our region have installed 1,466 alarms and helped make 913 households safer. To learn more about the campaign and how you can get

involved, visit redcross.org/HomeFires.

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and

their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information, visit redcross.org or CruzRojaAmericana.org, or visit us on Twitter at @RedCross



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