

Tips and Trends

Fire! How To Keep Your Family Safe

Question: It's the middle of the night; you and your family are awakened from deep sleep by the piercing sounds of your smoke alarm; what should you do first?

- A. Grab your fire extinguisher and try to find the fire.
- B. Get out of your home immediately.
- C. Call the fire department.
- D. Disconnect the smoke alarm and go back to sleep.

The answer is B – get out of your home immediately. Then call 911. **A small flame can turn into a major fire in less than 30 seconds, and can completely engulf a home in two minutes**, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Always take smoke alarm warnings seriously because you may have very little time to escape safely.

In 2015, home fires killed 14 people in New Hampshire and likely injured and caused financial loss to even more. Nationwide, seven people on average die every day from a home fire. HealthTrust supports the American Red Cross's Home Fire Preparedness Campaign. The campaign's goal is to reduce home fires by 25 percent in five years by encouraging all homeowners to do two things:

1. Install smoke alarms on each level of your home. Test them monthly and change the batteries when needed. Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.
2. Practice home fire drills. Make sure family members know two ways to escape from each room in your home. Decide on a place outside for all family members to meet in case of a fire.

The American Red Cross will install a smoke alarm in your home and give you additional tips for preventing fires in your home free of charge. For more information, visit www.redcross.org/local/new-hampshire-vermont/in-home-smoke-alarm.