

Fire Prevention Week 2019 – October 6 to October 12



The National Fire Prevention Week 2019 theme is *Not Every Hero Wears a Cape. Plan and Practice your Escape!*TM This year's campaign recognizes the everyday people who motivate their families to develop and practice a home fire escape plan; these seemingly basic behaviors can have a life-saving impact.

“This year's campaign works to celebrate people of all ages who learn about home fire escape planning and practice, bring that information home, and spur their families to action,” said Lorraine Carli, vice president of Outreach and Advocacy at NFPA. “From young students who learn about the campaign at school to parents who attend a community event like a fire station open house - all of them truly are heroes because they're taking steps to make their households much, much safer from fire.”

At Work

Fires in public buildings are rare. That's the good news. The challenge is, since fires are rare, employees may not know the employer's plans for a fire or a fire notification. “Not Every Hero Wears a Cape. Plan and Practice Your Escape!” speaks to the employer's need to not only have an Emergency Action Plan as required, but to make sure employees know the plan and have practiced the plan. The Safety Director encourages leaders in every department to give a Shift Briefing to their employees during Fire Prevention Week. Key points to cover include:

- The fire detection and alarm system – Does it include heat and/or smoke detectors. Is the detection of a fire reported to a monitoring agency such as ADT or to the local police, or will an occupant need to call 9-1-1 to report the alarm.
- If there is not a fire alarm system, how should a fire be reported and occupants notified.
- Primary and secondary escape routes should be reviewed from the various locations in the department
- Where are the primary and secondary assembly points
- The importance of promptly reporting to the assembly point and getting counted
- The importance of assisting special needs employees, visitors, and contractors in the process.

This bulletin is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion regarding any specific or factual situation. Always follow your organization's policies and procedures as presented by your manager or supervisor. For further information regarding this bulletin, contact your Safety Director at 877.398.3046.

At Home

“Not Every Hero Wears a Cape. Plan and Practice Your Escape!” also focuses on what a home escape plan entails and the value of practicing it. These messages are more important than ever, particularly because today’s homes burn faster than ever. The synthetic fibers used in modern home furnishings, along with the fact that newer homes tend to be built with more open spaces and unprotected lightweight construction, are contributing factors to the increased burn rate. Older homes may include larger dimensional lumber but have the hazards of older wiring that may be incompatible with today’s appliances, or multiple renovations that may have created void spaces or holes in fire partitions.

“People tend to underestimate their risk to fire, particularly at home. That over-confidence lends itself to a complacency toward home escape planning and practice,” said Carli. “But in a fire situation, we’ve seen time and again that advance planning can make a potentially life-saving difference.”

Your home escape plan should include two ways out of every room, usually a door and a window. Family members should have a designated outside meeting place (like a tree, light pole or mailbox) that’s a safe distance from the home. Remind family members that they should call 9-1-1 from the meeting place. They should not delay their evacuation while they call from inside the home.

Homes with young children should practice their escape plans twice a year.

A home escape plan includes working smoke alarms on every level of the home, in every bedroom, and near all sleeping areas. Test your smoke detectors monthly. Remember to change the batteries in your detectors when you change your clocks. This year, Daylight Saving Time ends on November 3, 2019.

Smoke detectors have a life expectancy, usually 7 to 10 years. If you can’t recall when you last changed them, change them now. Use a marker and date the new detectors as a reminder to change them again.

Make sure fire extinguishers are located immediately outside the kitchen, not next to the stove. A fire on the stove can make the extinguisher inaccessible if too close. Check the date on the extinguisher. If it is older than 10 years, replace it this weekend.

Away From the Home

Planning your escape should include places you visit, such as restaurants, hotels, concert venues, libraries, and other public places. Having a sense of situational awareness is even more important when you are out of your home and not at work because these locations are less familiar. Teach your family how to be aware of their surroundings.

Several of the most deadly fires in U.S. history have occurred in restaurants. When you and your family are seated, point out to everyone the two nearest exits from your table. Look for choke points along the routes such as overcrowded tables. And trust your instincts. Leave at the first sign of a fire. Many of the deaths were the result of smoke inhalation, from delaying their evacuation.

There is great temptation for owners / operators of public venues to allow more patrons than permitted by the fire codes. If the restaurant or other venue looks overcrowded, consider your options.

When traveling, after checking into your hotel room, count doors to the left and right of your room to the nearest two stairwells. Do not use the elevators in the event of a fire.

Fire Prevention Week is a great time to ‘piggy-back’ on the many public service announcements on television, radio, local cable channels, open houses at the fire station, and more. Be a hero. Add your voice, for a greater sense of fire awareness in your workplace and home.
