

# Rural Fire Safety

When a member of your community is killed in a home fire, it is important to let others know how they can prevent a similar tragedy. As you continue to report on the fire, the U.S. Fire Administration encourages you to remind your audience that many fire deaths and injuries are preventable.

More than 4,000 Americans die each year in fires and more than 20,000 are injured. Many of them might be alive today if they had only had the information they needed to avoid a disaster. The following life-saving tips could make a big difference to your audience. By incorporating them in your story now, while the moment is still fresh, you could help save a life.

## Did you know?

- Eighty-two percent of all fire deaths occur in the home.
- Heating is the leading cause of residential structure fires in rural areas.
- Deaths due to fires in rural areas are particularly preventable.
- Having a working smoke alarm reduces one's chance of dying in a fire by nearly a half.

Following these simple fire safety tips can boost survival rates dramatically. Please share them with your readers because knowledge is the best fire protection.

## Rural Fire Safety Life-Saving Tips

- Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Test smoke alarm batteries every month and change them at least once a year. Consider installing a 10-year lithium battery-powered smoke alarm, which is sealed so it cannot be tampered with or opened.
- When building a home or addition, use fire-resistant roofing materials. Avoid using wood materials that offer the least fire protection. Also, use fire-resistant siding such as stucco, brick, stone, etc.
- Let your landscape defend your property. Create defensible space by thinning trees and brush within 30 feet of your home.
- Stack firewood at least 30 feet away from your home and other structures.
- Store flammable materials, liquids and solvents in metal containers outside the home, at least 30 feet away from structures and wooden fences.
- Burning yard waste is a fire hazard. Check with your fire department on a non-emergency number for fire permit requirements and restricted burning times.
- Have your chimney inspected and cleaned regularly by a certified specialist.
- Provide emergency vehicle access with properly constructed driveways and roadways, at least 12 feet wide with adequate turnaround space.
- Post home address signs that are clearly visible from the road.
- Develop and practice fire escape and evacuation plans with your family.

For more information on the U.S. Fire Administration's Public Education Campaigns or to speak with a USFA spokesperson, please call 202-842-3600. Also

visit <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/> or <http://www.firesafety.gov/> for additional information on fire safety.