



NEWS

Office of State Fire Marshal
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State Fire Marshal Reminds Families to Stay Vigilant About Fire Safety and Prevention

Issues important year-round reminders for families to prevent and survive home fires

Raleigh -- Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshal Wayne Goodwin, Barnardsville Fire Department and Jupiter Fire Department are reminding North Carolinians to stay focused on fire safety and prevention all year-round. Families must never grow lax on safety planning that will increase the chances of surviving a home fire.

"Every day is a good day to keep fire prevention at the top of your mind," said Goodwin. "It shouldn't take a tragedy to remind adults and children about the importance of working smoke alarms and a home fire escape plan."

According to the National Fire Protection Association, working smoke alarms save lives and cut the risk of dying in a fire in half. So it is important for smoke alarms to be installed, tested and maintained in every home.

State Fire Marshal Goodwin has the following advice related to **smoke alarms**:

- Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping room, and on every level of the home, including the basement.
- An ionization smoke alarm is generally more responsive to flaming fires, and a photoelectric smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires. For the best protection, a combination of alarms, or dual-sensor alarms are recommended.
- To keep smoke alarms working well, follow the manufacturer's instructions in the package for cleaning. (Instructions can also be found on the internet.)
- Make sure everyone in your home knows the sound and understands the warning of the smoke alarm and knows how to respond.
- Smoke alarms with non-replaceable batteries (long-life) batteries are designed to remain effective for up to 10 years. Replace smoke alarms when they are 10 years old. If the alarm chirps warning

that the battery is low, replace the entire unit right away.

- For smoke alarms with any other type of battery, replace batteries at least once a year. If that alarm chirps, replace only the battery.
- Immediately replace any smoke alarm that does not respond properly when tested.
- If you rent and do not have working smoke alarms, contact your landlord or property manager immediately to have them installed. If, after you have contacted your landlord or property manager and no smoke alarms are installed, contact your local fire or building department. Some fire departments may install smoke alarms for you.

State Fire Marshal Goodwin recommends the following regarding **home escape plans**:

- Draw a map of each level of the home, showing all doors and windows, and discuss the plan with everyone in your household, including visitors.
- Practice your home fire escape drill twice a year with everyone in your home. Practice using different ways out. Practice what to do in case there is smoke (i.e., get low and go, and get out fast).
- Establish a permanent outside meeting place (e.g., a tree, light pole, mailbox) that is a safe distance from your home.
- After you've practiced your home escape drill, evaluate it and discuss what worked and what could be improved.

In the event of a fire, Fire Marshal Goodwin reminds families to do the following to **increase the likelihood of survival**:

- When a smoke alarm sounds, get out fast. You may have only seconds.
- If there is smoke blocking the exit, use your second way out. Before opening a door, feel the door and its knob. If either is hot, leave the door closed and use your second way out. If there is smoke coming around the door, leave the door closed and use your second way out.
- Get out and stay out. Go to your established meeting place. Never go back for people, pets or things. If you can't get to someone needing assistance, leave the home and call 911 or the fire department. Tell the emergency operator where the person is located.
- If you can't get out, close the door and cover the vents and cracks around doors with cloth or tape to keep smoke out. Call 911, tell the emergency operator where you are, and signal for help at the window with a light-colored cloth or a flashlight.

For more information about fire prevention and safety, go to the North Carolina Department of Insurance [Office of State Fire Marshal website](#), or the [National Fire Protection Association website](#).

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