

What Every Family Needs to Know

No one wants to think about having a fire at home. But thinking about it and being ready for it can and does save lives. Having working smoke alarms in your home provides early warning if there is a fire. Planning and practicing a home fire drill can prepare you to get out safely. If you think your home is not at risk for a home fire, consider these statistics: every 60 seconds there is a fire in the United States, approximately 4,000 people die in fires annually, and about 80 percent of these deaths occur in the home.

Please take a couple of minutes to talk to your family about fire safety today!

Sincerely,
Chief []

and the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service

Being ready is the key to surviving a home fire

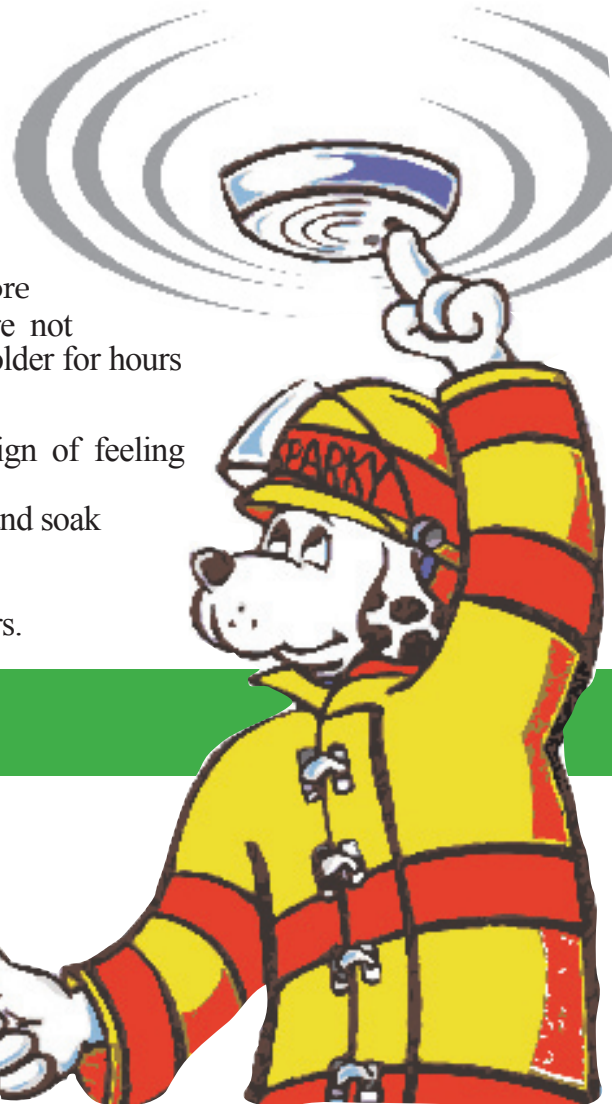
Be ready. There are three things YOU can do to protect your family. They are simple, but they are very important. Do them now, before fire strikes.

1. Install smoke alarms on all levels of your home.
2. Test smoke alarms each month to make sure they are working. Replace batteries every year. When we change clocks during day light saving is a good time.
3. Plan and practice home fire drills.

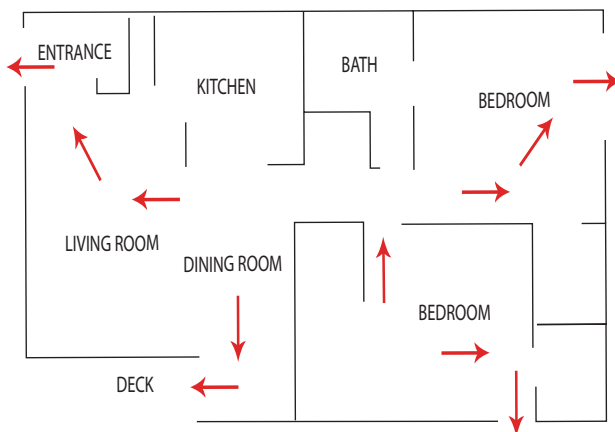
Careless smoking can be fatal

If you smoke, do it with care. Many fires are started when ashes or cigarette butts fall onto couches, chairs, on wooden decks, or in mulch. If you smoke, be careful around upholstered furniture, never smoke in bed and be sure cigarettes are completely extinguished by dowsing in water before disposal. Cigarettes continue to burn when they are not properly extinguished. Ashes from a cigarette can smolder for hours before a flare-up occurs.

- Put your cigarette or cigar out at the first sign of feeling drowsy.
- Use deep ashtrays. Extinguish your cigarettes and soak with water when finished.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Don't put ashtrays on the arms of sofas or chairs.



Home Escape Plan



Smoke alarms save lives

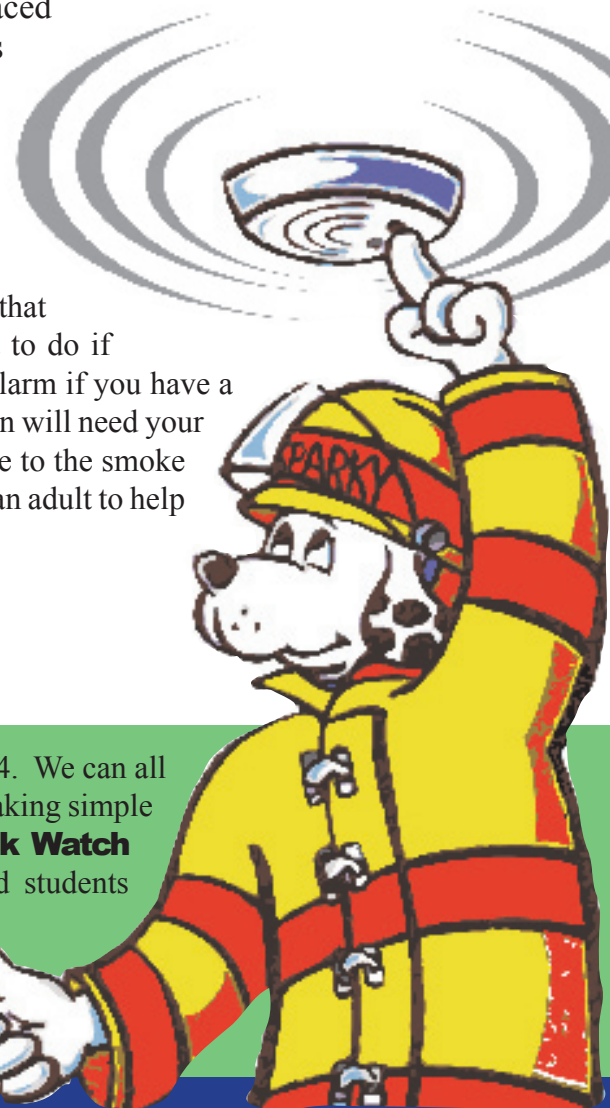
It doesn't matter if your home is big or small, old or new. All homes need smoke alarms that work. Install them near every bedroom. If your home has more than one level, install smoke alarms on every floor. The majority of fatal fires occur when people are sleeping, and because smoke from a fire can put you into a deeper sleep rather than waking you, it's important to have working smoke alarms to provide early warning of a fire to ensure that you wake up and can execute your escape plan. If anyone in your household is deaf or if your own hearing is diminished, consider installing a smoke alarm that uses a flashing light, vibration and/or higher decibel sound to alert you to a fire emergency.

Test your smoke alarm

Smoke alarm batteries should be changed at least once a year. If your smoke alarm starts making a "chirping" noise, replace the battery immediately. Test your smoke alarms monthly and use new batteries when replacing old ones. Some smoke alarms now on the market come with a ten-year battery and are designed to be replaced as a whole unit, thus avoiding the need for battery replacement. Smoke alarm units should be replaced every eight to ten years according to manufacturer's instructions.

Some children may not wake to smoke alarms

Children sleep very deeply. Adults need to make sure that children know the sound of the smoke alarm and what to do if they hear it. You can find out who can hear the smoke alarm if you have a fire drill when everyone else is sleeping. Younger children will need your help to escape a fire. If others in your home do not wake to the smoke alarm or require assistance getting out, plan to designate an adult to help them escape.



Injuries are the #1 health risk for children under age 14. We can all reduce that risk by learning to recognize dangers and taking simple steps to protect ourselves and our families. The **Risk Watch** safety program is available free to your school and students through the Fire Department. Call us today for information!

Give us a call

Smoke alarms are FREE to qualified Montgomery County residents. We're also available to come out and do a safety check of your home. Just give us a call at 240-777-2463 to schedule a visit.

Scott Goldstein
Fire Chief

Marc Elrich
County Executive