



Washington State Patrol • State Fire Marshal Chad Cross

*** For Immediate Release***

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Smoke Alarms and Home Escape

Olympia— The ability to get out of your home during a fire depends on advance warning from smoke alarms and proactive planning. Fire can spread rapidly through your home, and you may only have a short time to escape safely once the smoke alarm sounds. According to a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) survey, only one of every three households have developed and practiced a home fire escape plan, with only 8 percent stating that their first thought on hearing a smoke alarm would be to get out. The survey also discovered that while 71 percent of American households have an escape plan in case of a fire, only 47 percent of those have practiced it.

In 2025, 51 out of the 79 fire fatalities reported in Washington State by fire agencies occurred in areas without confirmed working smoke alarms present. Installing and maintaining smoke alarms and developing and practicing a home escape plan is important to home safety.

Working smoke alarms save lives. The SFMO encourages you to follow these safety tips:

- Make a home escape plan. Draw a map of your home showing all doors and windows and discuss the plan with everyone in your home.
- Install and maintain working smoke alarms in every sleeping area and on every floor of your home.
- Know at least two ways out of every room and make sure that all doors and windows leading to the outside open easily.
- Have an outside meeting place a safe distance from the home where everyone should meet.
- Practice your home fire drill at night and during the day with everyone in your home, twice a year, and practice using two different ways out.
- Close the doors behind you as you leave. A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
- If there are family members with mobility limitations, make sure that someone is assigned to assist them in the fire drill and assign a backup person in case that person is not home or unavailable.

For more information, contact the State Fire Marshal's Office at 360-596-3904.

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