



**American
Red Cross**

Heart of Tennessee Chapter

Heart of Tennessee Chapter
836 Commercial Court
Murfreesboro, TN 37129
www.midtnredcross.org

News Release NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Beth Ferguson
Phone: 615.893.4272 ext. 106
Fax: 615.895.8218
fergusonb@hot-redcross.org

National Fire Prevention Week Begins October 3

***American Red Cross Heart of Tennessee Chapter urges
people to make sure they have smoke alarms in their homes***

(MURFREESBORO) October 4, 2010 - As the country marks National Fire Prevention Week October 3-9 the American Red Cross Heart of Tennessee Chapter is urging everyone to help save lives by making sure their home is protected by smoke alarms.

"The largest percentage of home fire deaths occur in homes with no smoke alarms or alarms that don't work," said Brian Toll, Emergency Services Director, Heart of Tennessee Chapter. "Smoke alarms provide a few minutes of advance warning in the event of a home fire, and that extra time can save lives."

People who do not have smoke alarms in their home should have them installed, and those with smoke alarms should make sure they have been properly maintained and updated.

Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of the home, as well as inside bedrooms, and outside sleeping areas of the home. People should test their smoke alarms once a month by pushing the test button, and replace alarm batteries at least once a year. Other smoke alarm safety recommendations include:

- Installing a new smoke alarm battery immediately if an alarm chirps, warning that the battery is low.
- Teaching children what the smoke alarm sounds like, and what they should do when they hear it.
- Keeping the alarm clean by vacuuming over and around it regularly. Dust and debris can interfere with the alarm's operation. Do not paint over the smoke alarm.
- Moving the alarm farther away from the kitchen or bathroom if the device is sounding nuisance alarms. Never disable a smoke alarm.

The Red Cross also recommends that families create and practice a home fire escape plan, which should include at least two escape routes for every room in the home. Families should choose a convenient meeting place outside of the home and practice their escape plan at least twice a year with all family members.

Nationally, the Red Cross responds to thousands of local fires throughout the country every year. Last year, the Heart of Tennessee Chapter responded to approximately one house fire every four days.

The Red Cross reminds people of the following fire safety tips they should take:

- *Keep all sources of fuel (paper, clothing, bedding, and carpets or rugs) at least three feet away from all heat sources when cooking, or using alternative heating like a space heater.*
- *Don't leave the kitchen while frying, grilling or broiling food, and don't leave home while cooking.*
- *Keep matches and lighters away from and out of the reach of children.*
- *If a fire occurs, get out and stay out. Call the fire department from a cell phone or neighbor's home.*
- *If smoke or fire blocks the first escape route, use a second way. If someone must exit through smoke, they should crawl low under the smoke to the exit. If escaping through a closed door, feel the door before opening it. If the door is warm, get out a different way.*

- *If smoke, heat, or flames block the way out, stay in the room with the door closed. Signal for help using a brightly colored cloth at the window. If there is a telephone in the room, call the fire department and tell them the location*

More information on home fire safety is available on www.redcross.org. People can help those affected by home fires and other emergencies by making a financial donation online to the Heart of Tennessee Chapter at www.midtnredcross.org or by mailing a contribution to

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The Heart of Tennessee Chapter of the American Red Cross provides vital emergency assistance to help victims of local disasters in Rutherford, Bedford, Cannon, Franklin, Coffee & Moore counties. Over the past year the Chapter responded to 99 single family fires, trained nearly 11,625 people in CPR & First Aid, Babysitting and Aquatics training, and provided pre-deployment briefings and emergency communications for 284 families of active duty military personnel and their families. Over 13,177 pints of life-saving blood were collected from the community last year. All of these services are made possible by over 320 dedicated local Red Cross volunteers as well as through generous gifts from the local community. To get more information please call 615) 893-4272 or log on to www.midtnredcross.org.

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