

Home Fires: The Big Picture

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People are used to seeing news reports about home fires. They tell where and when the fire occurred, whether anyone was injured or killed, maybe the cause of the fire. Sometimes, a follow-up report tells about the status of victims, notes investigation findings, or describes the community's response to the fire. These reports tell the story of one fire, in one particular home, at one particular time. Most people probably think, "That unfortunate family." But they probably don't think, "That could happen to me." Or, "How can I prevent a fire in my home?"

Home fires, and the injuries and deaths that result, are not rare and isolated events. Home fires happen in communities all over the country, every day. They're deadly, and they're costly. And they can change the lives of families forever. But they're not unavoidable. Home fires and fire deaths can be prevented.

Fires are deadly.

- In the United States, a home fire claims a life every 3 hours.
- Every half-hour, someone is injured in a home fire.

Fires are costly.

- In 2006 alone, residential fires cost nearly \$7 billion in property damage.
- Injuries related to fires and burns cost \$1.3 billion in 2000.
- Fatal fire injuries cost \$66 million.
- Fires and burns caused \$6.2 billion in lost productivity in 2000.
- The sentimental value of lost personal items and keepsakes cannot be estimated.

Fires are devastating.

- A fire can destroy a home and everything in it in a matter of minutes.
- Recovering from a fire can be physically and mentally draining.
- The loss of personal belongings and keepsakes can be traumatic.
- The loss of a home to fire can be particularly difficult for the elderly, who may have lived in a home for decades, or for young children, who

have lost the safe familiarity of toys, clothes, and rooms and may be confused by the distraught adults around them.

Fires deaths can happen to anyone, but some groups are at greater risk.

Young children:

Children younger than 5 have a higher risk of fire injury and death than older children.

Older adults:

Adults 65 and older are twice as likely as any other age group to die in a home fire. The death rate for those 85 and older is five times the national average.

Fires and resulting deaths can be prevented.

People need to know they can help prevent home fires and survive them if they happen:

- By installing smoke alarms on every floor, outside every sleeping area and in every sleeping area, too.
- By having an escape plan and practicing it with the whole family.
- By practicing fire safety when cooking, using candles, dryers, smoking and space heaters.

Barriers make fire prevention more difficult.

The biggest barrier to preventing fire deaths is lack of access to smoke alarms. The homes at greatest risk of deadly fires are also those least likely have working smoke alarms. Another barrier is lack of information-people can't prevent fire deaths if they don't know what to do. *Knowledge is power!*

Fire prevention program that can overcome barriers.

Have a firefighter come to your home to do a *free*, confidential, room to room check with prevention suggestions. Again it is **FREE** and you receive many valuable coupons upon completion. Appointments are made at your convenience. Call the **Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View Fire Department for a free Home Safety Survey@ 767-767-4003**