



FEMA

QUICK RESPONSE

Fire Safety in the News

Quick Response Media Corps, a program of the U.S. Fire Administration, serves as a source of information and support for Fire Service personnel who share a commitment to getting fire safety in the news. After a brief break, the program is now back in action. We will once again offer tips for getting fire safety and prevention messages in the local news, and we invite members to share their accounts of what has worked for them. One benefit of being part of the Quick Response Media Corps is that when a fatal fire in your area has been reported in the news, we alert *you* that we are sending Quick Response information to your local media. We also give you “sneak previews” of USFA’s upcoming public education programs, so you can be a local spokesperson for the media. Please remember to update your contact information by e-mail: quickresponse@hagerssharp.com.

USFA appreciates your continued commitment to making your communities safer from fire. We look forward to supporting your efforts.

Sincerely,
Kathy Gerstner
U.S. Fire Administration

USFA Releases Report on Deadly Fires and Smoke Alarms

In June 2005, USFA released a report, *Residential Smoking Fires and Casualties*, which highlights the characteristics of these high-loss fires. The report also points to the disproportionate number of fatalities as a result of these fires – smoking fires made up only four percent of all residential fires but were responsible for 19 percent of fatalities in 2002. To download the report, visit www.usfa.fema.gov.

Make Fire Safety Messages ‘News You Can Use’

Newspapers, radio and TV news stations are often looking for information that is helpful to their audience, called “news you can use.” For example, combine facts from a recent USFA report on smoke alarms (visit www.usfa.fema.gov to download the report) with excerpts from the Quick Response fact sheet’s “Life-Saving Tips on Smoke Alarms” included below, then offer the information to your contacts in the local media.

- Place a smoke alarm on every level of your home and outside bedrooms. If you keep your bedroom doors closed, place a smoke alarm in each bedroom.
- Check smoke alarms monthly by pushing the test button. If you cannot reach the button easily, use a broom handle.
- Change the batteries in your alarms at least once a year – perhaps when you change your clocks for Daylight Savings Time.

- Teach children what the smoke alarm sounds like and what to do – leave the building immediately by crawling low under the smoke – when they hear it sound.
- If cooking smoke sets off the alarm, do not disable it. Turn on the range fan, open a window or wave a towel near the alarm.
- Do not remove the batteries to put in other appliances such as personal stereos or games.
- Smoke alarms wear out over time. Replace yours if it is 10 years old or more.
- Consider installing a 10-year lithium battery-powered smoke alarm, which is sealed so it cannot be tampered with or opened.
- Hard wired smoke alarms with battery back-ups need to be tested monthly and batteries replaced yearly.

Send Your Example of Fire Safety in the News

How did your department take advantage of the “teachable moment” when there was a residential fire fatality in your community? What’s your best advice for getting fire safety and prevention messages in the news? Share your examples (including links to stories) and insight with fellow firefighters by sending it to quickresponse@hagerssharp.com. We will include it in a forthcoming edition of this e-bulletin.