

Fire Prevention Week Oct. 3-9: 'Smoke Alarms: A sound you can live with'

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside all sleeping areas, and on every level of the home, including the basement.

According to the NFPA, which develops NFPA 72 National Smoke Alarm Code, many homes still don't have that level of protection. Unfortunately, almost two-thirds of home fire deaths per year result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms at all or no working smoke alarms.

In an effort to better educate the public about smoke alarm recommendations, NFPA is promoting "Smoke Alarms: A sound you can live with" as the theme for Fire Prevention Week 2010, Oct. 3-9. NFPA has been the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for 88 years.

"Many U.S. homes may still only have one smoke alarm," says Lorraine Carli, NFPA's vice president of communications. "That is simply not enough." Carli emphasizes that smoke alarms must be installed in all bedrooms, not just near them, to ensure that everyone is alerted in time to escape safely.

Smoke alarms can cut the chance of dying in a fire in half, but they must be working properly to do so. NFPA's data shows that many homes have smoke alarms that aren't working or maintained properly, usually because of missing, disconnected or dead batteries.

"This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign works to motivate the public to actively determine whether they have proper smoke alarm protection throughout their homes," says Carli. "It also encourages people to explore newer, more comprehensive options for smoke alarms."

According to NFPA, interconnected smoke alarms offer the best

NFPA offers the following tips for smoke alarms:

- ✓ Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button, and make sure everyone in your home knows their sound.
- ✓ If an alarm "chirps," warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- ✓ Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they're 10 years old (or sooner) if they do not respond properly when tested.

protection; when one sounds, they all do. This is particularly important in larger or multi-story homes, where the sound from distant smoke alarms may be reduced to the point that it may not be loud enough to provide proper warning, especially for sleeping individuals. Interconnected smoke alarms can be hard-wired or wireless battery-operated interconnected alarms are now available.

Fire departments throughout the country will be hosting activities during Fire Prevention Week to promote the campaign locally. These educational, family-oriented activities can help everyone learn more about the power of smoke alarms, newer options for installing and maintaining them properly, and ultimately, how to better protect themselves and loved ones from fire.

To find out more about Fire Prevention Week, smoke alarms and this year's campaign, "Smoke Alarms: A sound you can live with!", visit NFPA's Web site at <http://www.firepreventionweek.org> <<http://www.firepreventionweek.org>>.