

## Health and Safety Alert

### *Fire Prevention and Safety*



#### The Importance of Fire Exit Plans

Panic can be a factor in death or serious injury from fire and is usually a result of people not knowing what to do to reach safety. All families and households are strongly encouraged by Fire Departments to have a Fire Exit Plan in the event of a fire that requires everyone to evacuate the home. You and others living in the home should work out the most appropriate Fire Exit Plan for the home. This is particularly important if one or more people living in the home have a disability and need specific assistance to get out of the home.

**Fire is FAST!** In the event of a fire, you won't have time to grab valuables or make a phone call because fire spreads too quickly and the smoke is too thick. There is only time to escape. In just two minutes, a fire can become life-threatening. In five minutes, a home can be totally engulfed in flames. Make sure all of your smoke alarms are checked periodically for needed battery replacement. Test them and make sure that they are still in good working order.

**Fire is HOT!** Heat is more threatening than flames. A fire's heat alone can kill.

**Fire is DARK!** Fire isn't bright, it is pitch black. Fire starts bright, but quickly produces black smoke and complete darkness. If you wake up to a fire you may be blinded and disoriented.

**Fire is DEADLY!** Smoke and toxic gases kill more people than flames do. Breathing even small amounts of smoke and toxic gases can make you drowsy, disoriented and short of breath.

#### Fire Prevention Tips

- Make sure there is a working smoke alarm on each level of your home. If bedrooms are on opposite ends of the home, use two smoke alarms.
- Check smoke detectors monthly and change batteries as needed.
- Avoid the use of portable heaters. They can tip & quickly start a fire.
- Make sure clothing pockets are emptied before putting clothes in the dryer. Lighters & paper can start a fire.
- Avoid leaving the house with the dryer in use.
- Regularly check the condition of electrical cords.
- Store flammable products like aerosol cans out of direct sunlight. A cool, dark closet is best.
- Store gasoline cans and containers outside of the house and attached garage.
- If an electrical outlet becomes overly hot, immediately unplug the device and call an electrician.
- Develop a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan for individuals who are non-ambulatory and/or need extra assistance.



**Stay tuned for more  
Resources on Fire Safety  
Coming soon to the  
OIH website!**



## Do you need a smoke alarm?

The Home Fire Campaign helps save lives by installing free smoke alarms in homes that don't have them, and by educating people about home fire safety.

Every day, seven people die in home fires, most in homes that lack working smoke alarms. The American Red Cross wants to make a difference and save lives, that's why they launched the Home Fire Campaign in 2014.

A critical part of the campaign is Sound the Alarm, a series of home fire safety and smoke alarm installation events across the country. Red Cross volunteers, along with fire departments and other partners canvass at-risk neighborhoods, installing free smoke alarms, replacing batteries in existing alarms, and providing fire prevention and safety education.

Visit the following for events in your area.  
<https://www.redcross.org/sound-the-alarm.html>

\*The Red Cross and its partners will install a limited number of free smoke alarms for those who cannot afford to purchase smoke alarms or for those who are physically unable to install a smoke alarm. Depending on where you live and other factors, it is possible that the Red Cross will forward your request to one of their partner organization. If you would like to identify your local regional office, please visit RedCross.org (or call 1-800-REDCROSS).

## Let's CHAT About Health

VCU's Partnership for People with Disabilities is currently providing **Let's CHAT About Health**, a health literacy training for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Participants will learn:

- How to better communicate health concerns with doctors, healthcare providers, and supporters.
  - How to speak up and ask specific questions about their health.
  - Preparing for medical visits and identifying health priorities.



### Two Training Options

**SPEAKING UP ABOUT HEALTH:** In this session (90 min), participants are introduced to major concepts of health and communication and complete a "Health Passport".

**COMMUNICATION & HEALTH ADVOCACY:** These four sessions (60-90min each) are designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of concepts, interactive activities, and audience participation.

**Audience:** Groups of 7-13 adults with disabilities



### Scheduling

Co-trainers will travel on-site and provide the training sessions free of charge within a two-hour radius of Richmond, Virginia.

To schedule training or for more information, please contact

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