



During the month of October, the Indian Health Service Head Start Program will distribute weekly Fire Prevention Tips to observe *Fire Safety Month*.

You can make a difference, not only at your Head Start centers, but also in your homes.

Approximately 3,320 people lost their lives and more than 16,705 were injured in the United States in 2008. Don't become a statistic. ***Be prepared, plan ahead.***

There are four important actions that you can take to protect your children, your family and yourself.

- Install and maintain smoke alarms on every level of your home.
- Install and maintain smoke alarms in every classroom of your Head Start center.
- Design, understand, and post an escape plan for your homes and Head Start centers.
- ***Practice. Practice. Practice.***

Planning your fire escape plan.

- Draw a floor plan of your Head Start center and home, mark the escape route, and mark at least two exits from each room and building, if possible.
- To determine a safe outdoor meeting place at your Head Start center, please discuss all options with your local fire department or your Tribal safety personnel.
- Post the fire escape plan in a visible location near exit doors.
- Be sure to assign individuals to infants or anyone with mobility challenges.
- Ensure all individuals, in your homes or at the Head Start centers, know the expected meeting place after exiting the building.
- Make sure all staff members, children and family know and understand the fire escape plan.

Practice your fire escape plan monthly.

- Put your plan to test by holding monthly fire drills at the Head Start centers, and at least twice a year at your homes.
- It is a good idea, to have your local fire officials educate the Head Start children about fire safety, and the events that occur during a real fire.
- Have the firemen wear their gear at the Head Start center, to reassure the children that they are not "scary."
- Make sure during the test, children are surprised by the sound of the smoke alarm or fire alarm.
- Account for every child, staff, and family member while exiting the building and at your designated meeting place.
- Do not enter the building until an official tells you it is safe.

Please invite your local firefighters to your Head Start centers to talk to the children about fire safety.

Next week: ***Fire Safety Partners in your Community and Nationally***