

STAFF & CHILDCARE PROVIDER'S TRAINING GUIDE



This Guide can be used to provide training about fire safety to Head Start teachers, staff, and childcare providers (e.g., parents and grandparents). These presentations can be made in small group settings (e.g. during staff training, open houses, parent-teacher meetings, or special events such as Fire Safety Week) or in the homes of Head Start Center families. Some of the information included in this Guide can also be provided or conveyed to larger audiences through newsletter articles, posters, and/or public service announcements. IHS/Tribal Environmental Health Officers can assist in these activities.

Related Head Start Performance Standard: 1304.22 (d)(2)

Outcomes:

Upon completing this component, participants will be able to:

- Understand why smoke alarms are the most effective fire safety device.
- Demonstrate how to correctly maintain and place a smoke alarm.
- Develop a fire escape plan for their home.
- Teachers and staff will be able to communicate fire safety concepts to childcare providers.

Key Concepts:

- Fire/burn deaths are the #1 cause of injury death for American Indian and Alaska Native children, ages 1-4.
- A working smoke alarm in the home doubles the chance of surviving a fire.
- Practicing home fire escape plans can save your family members' lives.
- Parents need to identify basic home fire safety hazards and know how to correct them.

Organizing a Training Session

There are several issues to consider when organizing a Training Session.



First, it is important to decide **WHEN** to conduct training presentations.

- In the past, Sleep Safe Program Coordinators have presented training sessions to teachers and other staff during orientation or staff in-service sessions.
- Many Sleep Safe Program Coordinators have conducted childcare provider training sessions as part of regular parent meetings. Another approach is to develop a special fire safety training session for parents/childcare providers.

Second, getting teachers and staff together for a training session is probably much easier than getting parents and childcare providers to attend a Sleep Safe Program training session. **HOW** will you get busy parents and childcare providers to attend a session?

- Communicate the date, time, location, and topic of the presentation well in advance so that families can plan to attend. Sending home a reminder to attend the meeting two days in advance is helpful.
- It is often helpful to provide incentives such as food/snacks or door prizes in order to increase attendance at training presentations.
- Another way of encouraging parents/caregivers to attend might be to make the training exercises above a requirement for those who wish to receive a free smoke alarm.

Third, you should decide **WHAT** information you want to include in each training presentation. This Guide provides three specific activities to present to families. Please refer to the *Tribal Partnerships Guide* for other activities that may be incorporated into educational training presentations you give to parents and childcare providers.

The four primary training presentation activities included in this Guide are:

Activity	Materials Needed	Time Needed
#1: Just the Facts	Fire Fact Sheet Handout(s)	15 minutes
#2: Video + Discussion Guide	Video: Select "Practicing Home Fire Safety" or "Prepare, Practice, Prevent the Unthinkable"; VCR; Discussion Guide; props	20-30 mins. (each video)
#3: Smoke Alarms	Choosing, Installing, and Maintaining Smoke Alarms Handouts; a working smoke alarm; binder + protective sheets	15 minutes
#4: Home Fire Escape Plan	Plan to Get Out Alive Handout/Worksheet	15 minutes



Activity #1: Just the Facts

Introduction

This activity focuses on the facts about home fires and fire/burn injuries. It is important to give Head Start teachers, staff, and also childcare providers this information so that they can understand the seriousness of the fire injury problem among American Indians/Alaska Natives in the United States and in their local community. This information can also be presented to other groups, such as Tribal Council or Health Board.

Materials Needed

Multiple copies of Fire Fact Sheet Handout, laptop and projector or overhead projector (optional).

Action Steps – Prior to and During a Training Presentation

1. Read and review the information provided in the Fire Fact Sheet Handout.
2. Use the information on the handout to make your own fact sheets. You might work with your local IHS/Tribal Environmental Health Officer to find and include local community and other facts at the bottom of the Fire Fact Sheet Handout.
3. Make multiple photocopies of handouts that you want to present.
4. Decide what training approach (see below) you will use to present information included in the Fire Fact Sheet Handouts.
5. Conduct your Training Presentation.

Training Approaches

There are several creative ways in which you can present information included in the Fire Fact Sheet Handout, including the following:

- Use the handouts as-is or put selected information into a Power Point presentation. If you do not have equipment needed for this, you might make overhead sheets to present.

- Ask participants multiple choice or true/false questions, for example:

-What is the single most important thing to have in your home to protect yourself and your family from house fire injury?

- a. Baking soda
- b. Smoke alarm
- c. Fire extinguisher

-Fire/burn deaths are the #1 cause of death for which age group?

- a. elderly > 65
- b. teenagers (13-19)

- c. middle-age (35-55) d. children (1-4)

-Which of the following is not a risk factor for house fire injury?

- a. smoking b. children playing with matches
c. owning a dog d. unattended cooking

-True or False, the fire death rate for American Indians/Alaska Natives is 2 times the National Average?

-True or False, most fire and burn injuries cannot be prevented because they are a result of unpredictable accidents?

-Young children may not wake up to the sound of a smoke alarm. Which of the following things can you do to help make sure that they respond to a smoke alarm:

- a. practice smoke alarm drills b. make sure they are not home alone
c. both a) and b)

-True or False. One reason that children 0-4 are at a high risk of fire-related death is that they tend to sleep through a smoke alarm's sounding

-What is the leading cause of fatal house fires?

- a. smoking materials b. chimneys
c. arson d. children playing with matches

Note: Add additional local and other information to the following Fire Fact Sheets if you have such data. The data from the Fire Fact Sheets were compiled from the following four reports available from the US Fire Administration (www.usfa.dhs.gov) (www.usfaparents.gov) and from WISQARS, a web database (www.cdc.gov/ncipc).

- **Babies and Toddlers Fire Death Data Report, USFA, 10/2003 (includes State baby/toddler fire fact sheets)**
- **USFA/National Fire Data Center, Fatal Fires, Topical Fire Research Series, Vol. 5 (1), 3/2005**
- **USFA/National Fire Data Center, Residential Fires and Child Casualties, Topical Fire Research Series, Vol.5 (2), 4/2005**
- **USFA/National Fire Data Center, The Fire Risk to Children, Topical Fire Research Series, Volume 4-Issue 8, December 2004**
- **Marty Ahrens, NFPA Fire Analysis and Research Division, The US Fire Problem Overview Report: Leading Causes and Other Patterns and Trends, June 2003**
- **CDC WISQARS (www.cdc.gov/ncipc)**

Fire Fact Sheet 1



Overview

- The United States and Canada have the highest rates of home fire deaths of any developed country. This is probably because many foreign cities expect long fire department response times, and put their resources into preventing fires rather than extinguishing fires.
- House fires account for most of the fire-related deaths and injuries in the US. During 2002, 2,614 people (43 American Indians / Alaska Natives) died in house fires. That's equal to six full 747 jets crashing with no survivors each year.
- Males died more often in fires (65%) more likely than females (2002).
- Most fatal fires occur at night, between 10 pm and 6 am.
- Populations with the lowest income levels are at a greater risk of dying in a fire than those with higher incomes.
- People living in rural areas have a higher risk of fire death than those in urban areas.
- Fatal fires are most common in winter when heating devices are used.
- In 2002, the leading causes of house fires with fatalities were: arson (22%), smoking (21%), and open flames (16%) (Chart 1). This changes if you look at the leading causes of fires with injuries. In this case, cooking (mostly unattended cooking) is the leading cause, followed by heating devices, and arson.
- In 2002, fatal fires occurred primarily in residences (homes and apartments) (69.3%), followed by vehicle fires (20.7%), then non-residential structures (4.3%).
- Nationally, more than 90% of homes have smoke alarms. However, for home fires with deaths, 42% of these homes had no smoke alarms present. Of the homes that did have smoke alarms, 63% did not work at the time of the fatal fire.
 - Fire and burn injuries and death can be prevented using basic fire safety strategies such as smoke alarms. But in order to save lives, smoke alarms must be properly installed and maintained. Smoke alarms double your chances of surviving a house fire.
- The most fatal fires started in the bedroom, followed by the living room, then the kitchen in 2002 (Chart 2).

Chart 1: Causes of Fatal Home Fires, 2002

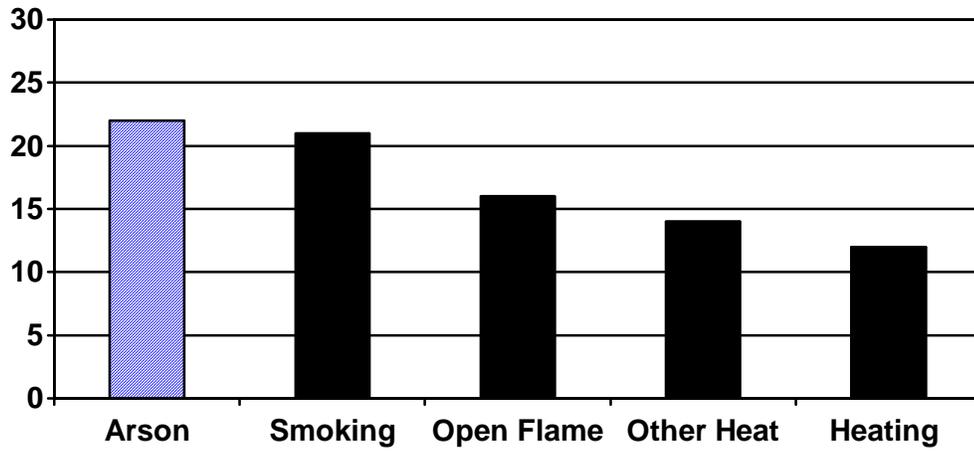


Chart 2: Room Where Fatal Home Fires Started, 2002



Fire Fact Sheet 2

Fire and Children



- The elderly and children are at the highest risk of fire/burn death (Chart 3). This is because they may have less developed or limited mental and physical abilities to recognize and respond to fire; children may not recognize the danger or may not be able to escape independently from a fire. As children mature and develop (after age 4), the risk of fire death drops sharply.
- During 2002, 55% of children that died in house fires were sleeping at the time of the fire. Studies have shown that children 15 and under may not awaken when a smoke alarm sounds. It is important to teach children to recognize and respond to the sound of a smoke alarm and to make sure that an adult is present to waken sleeping children and assist them in escaping from a fire.
- During 2002, 2,490 children (14 and younger) were injured and 600 killed in fires. Sixty-five percent of these children under the age of 5. **Nearly one child under the age of 5 dies in a house fire nearly every day.**
- American Indian / Alaska Native and African American children are at higher risk of fire death than other races.
- Young children are curious and will touch and play with items within their reach. This includes matches, lighters, and other sources of heat. Playing with heat sources resulted in over 34,000 fires in 2001 and was the leading cause of fire injuries among children. Deaths due to playing with lighters have been reduced in recently due to a law requiring child resistant lighters.

Chart 3: House Fire Death Rates by Age Group, 1999-2002

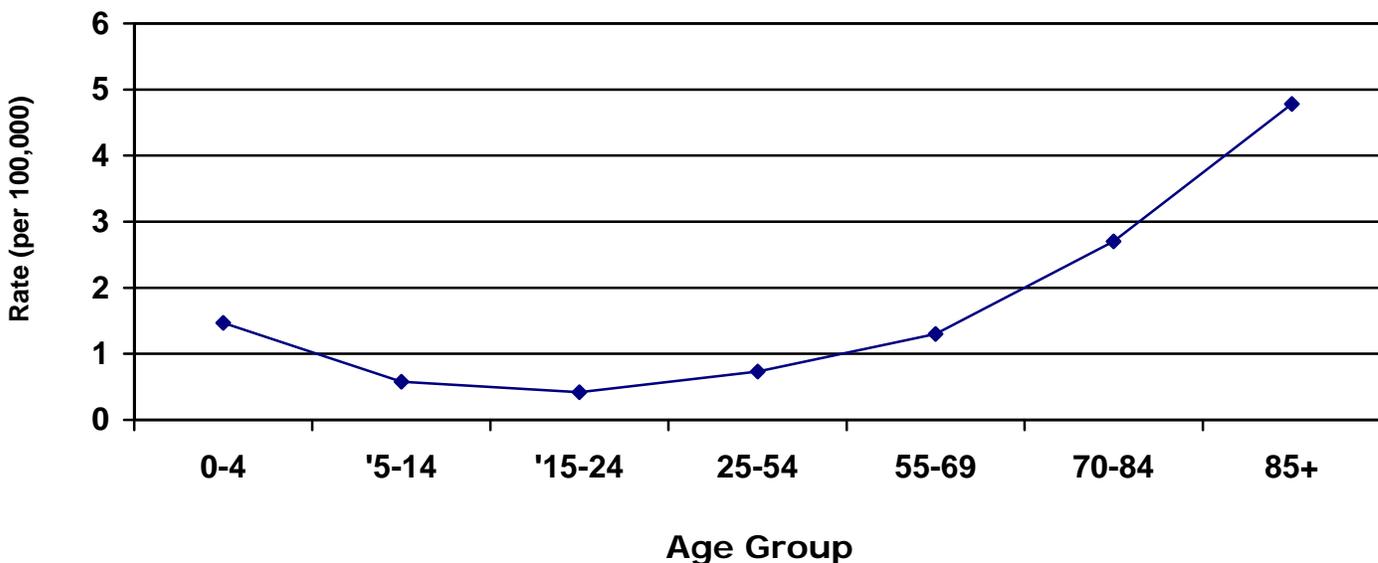
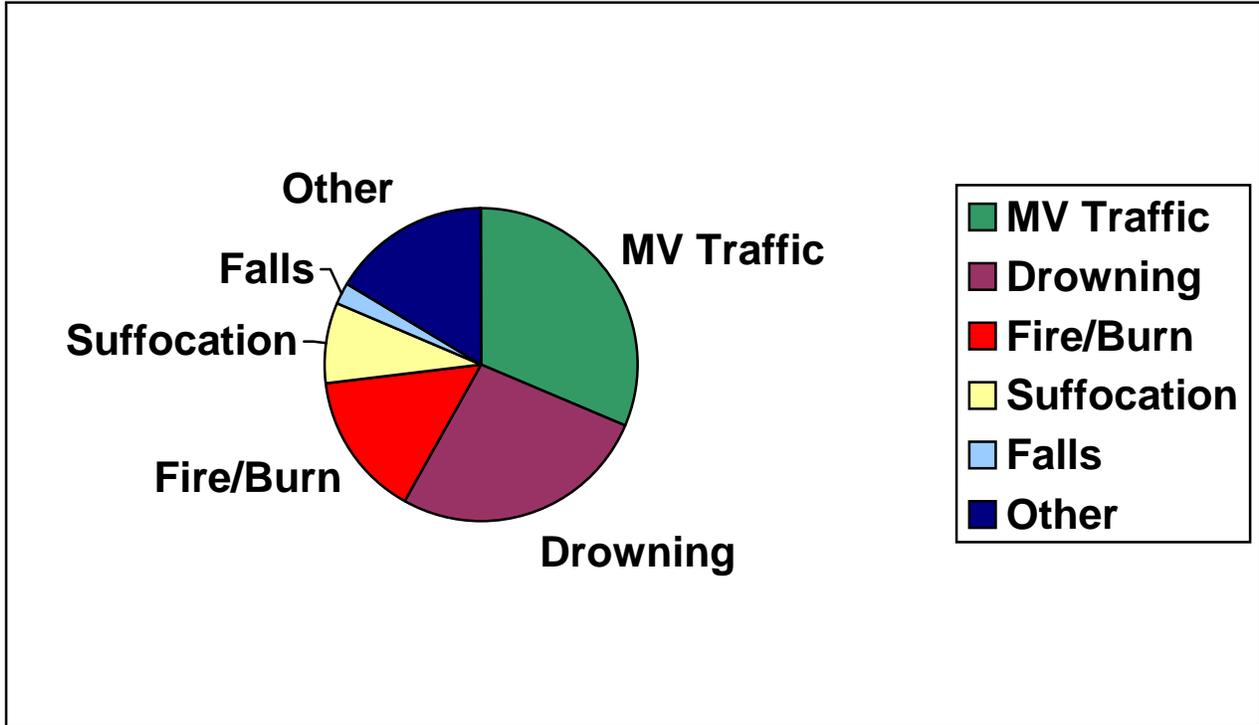


Chart 4: Leading Causes of Unintentional Injury Death in Children 1-4 years old, 1999-2002*



*Source: CDC WISQARS (www.cdc.gov/ncipc)

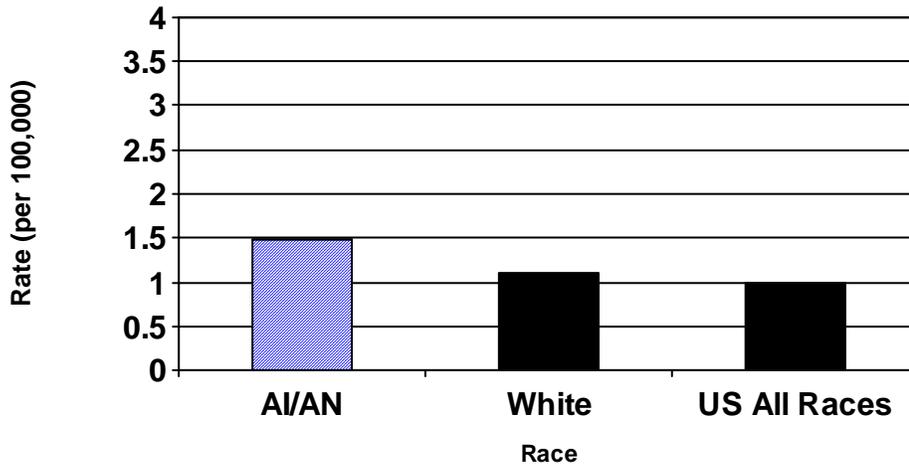
Fire Fact Sheet 3



Fire and American Indians and Alaska Natives

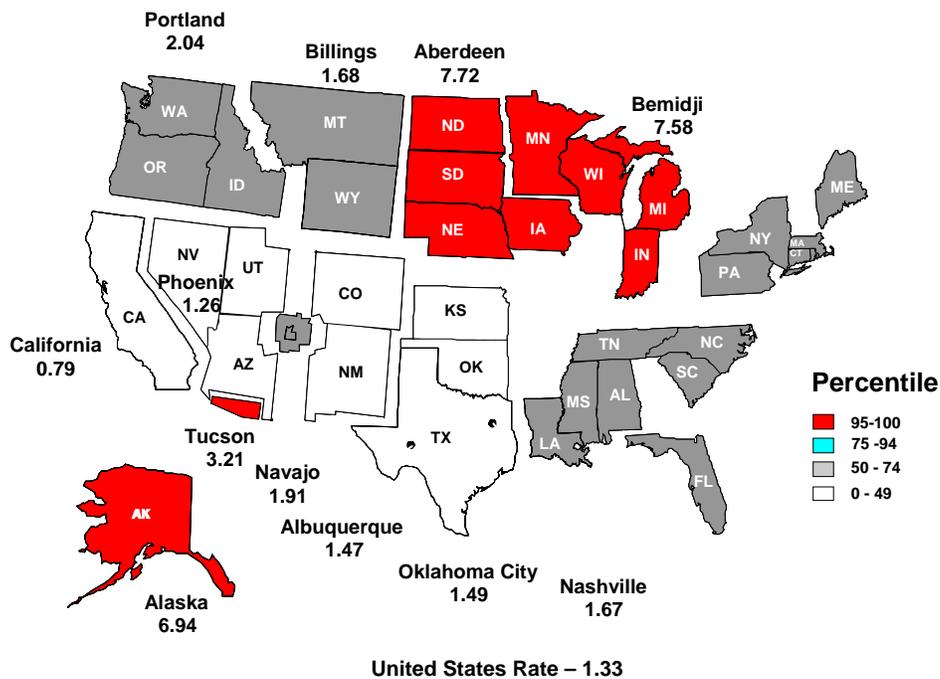
- The fire death rate for American Indians/Alaska Natives is nearly twice the National average (Chart 5). American Indians / Alaska Natives and African Americans have the highest rate of fire-related death of any population. On average, one American Indian/Alaska Native dies in a house fire every eight days.
- American Indian / Alaska Native communities in different areas of the country have different risk of fire injury and death. The northern states and Alaska generally have higher rates of home fire-related death than the southern states. Certain IHS Areas (Alaska, Aberdeen, and Bemidji) have house fire/burn death rates that are 7 – 9 times the National average (Chart 6).
- Fire/burn deaths are the #1 cause of death in the home, and the third leading cause of unintentional injury death for American Indian/Alaska Native children ages 1-4.
- Smoke alarms double the chances of surviving a house fire. Yet, homes on many reservations and Alaska Native villages lack at least one working smoke alarm. Studies have shown that in some American Indian/Alaska Native communities, more than half of all homes lack a working smoke alarm.
- A big problem in many American Indian/Alaska Native communities is disconnection of smoke alarms due especially to false alarms during cooking. Proper placement and selection of smoke alarms can reduce false alarms, yet provide effective fire safety. The Sleep Safe program distributes photoelectric smoke alarms and emphasizes placement away from the stove and bathroom, factors that reduce false alarms.

Chart 5: House Fire Death Rates by Race* 1999-2002



*Data source: CDC WISQARS (www.cdc.gov/ncipc)

Chart 6: Fire Death Rates per 100,000 by IHS Area, American Indian and Alaska Native Children Ages 1-19* 1989-1998*



*Data are for AI/AN Service Population, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Vital Statistics tapes.



Activity #2: Video + Discussion Guide

Introduction

This activity gives uses a video to present information on fire safety. This activity can be used during staff training sessions, parent meetings, and during home visits. Either of two videos, plus discussion guides, may be used:

- Video 1: The 9-minute video “Practicing Home Fire Safety” was filmed on the Leech Lake Reservation in Minnesota, and centers around a family that is implementing fire safety practices in their home. It focuses on considerations for installing and maintaining smoke alarms and developing and practicing home evacuation plans.
- Video 2: The 9-1/2 -minute video “Prepare, Practice, Prevent the Unthinkable” was produced by the US Fire Administration as part of the USFA fire safety campaign for babies and toddlers. It emphasizes the need to be prepared and to practice fire prevention/safety to prevent fire injury and death. It may be obtained from www.usfaparents.gov. This campaign includes posters, a report, and one-page handouts that show data by state.

Materials Needed

A copy of the selected video, the accompanying Video Discussion Guide, and a VCR. Props such as a smoke alarm, Velcro®, a sample evacuation plan, and other props may be useful for demonstration during the discussion. Handouts such as those used in Activity 1: “Just the Facts”, or Activity 3: “Smoke Alarms” may be given to participants to reinforce discussion points.

Action Steps – Prior to a Training Presentation

1. View the selected video and review the accompanying Video Discussion Guide.
2. Make any handouts that you want to present.
3. Set up the VCR and props.

Action Steps – During a Training Presentation

1. At the beginning of the training session, you will want to introduce the concept of home fire safety; refer to Activity 1 for information that you may use in a presentation. American Indians and Alaska Natives have a high risk of injury or death due to home fires. One main reason for this is a lack of working smoke alarms. Fire injury and death can be prevented by practicing simple fire safety strategies such as maintaining a working smoke alarm and developing and practicing home fire escape plans. As an instructor, your intent is to get the parents (or staff) to discuss the film in order to reinforce the positive fire safety messages in the film.
2. Show the video.
3. Facilitate a discussion of the video using the Discussion Guide.
4. Continue on with Activity 3 or provide and discuss the handout Choosing, Installing, and Maintaining Smoke Alarms from Activity 3.

Video 1: Practicing Home Fire Safety Video Discussion Guide

The following questions should be brought up with the parents (or staff) after they have viewed the tape--read the questions and then allow participants to discuss the topics. You may think of others that can be discussed during your training session. Don't read the answers unless participants get off track and need to be focused.

This first question can be used to get the participants at ease:

- "Did you like the video?"
 - If yes, ask "what did you like about the video?"
- What type of smoke alarm did they install in the home?
 - Answer: Photoelectric
- Promote a discussion about why photoelectric smoke alarms are used
 - Answer: to reduce false alarms from cooking
- Give me a major location that you want to avoid when installing a smoke alarm
 - Answer: Stove
- How far do you need to place the smoke alarm from the stove?
 - Answer: 20 feet
- Can anyone think of another location you want to avoid and why?
 - Answer: bathroom – steam from the shower
- How far do you want to get it from the bathroom?
 - At least 10 feet
- What about placement? Can I stick the smoke alarm anywhere on the ceiling or wall?
 - Answer 1: If installing on the Wall: Be at least 4 inches down but no more than 12 inches from the junction of the ceiling and wall to avoid dead air space (instructor may want to discuss dead air space issue and show diagram from the Sleep Safe manual to illustrate this)
 - Answer 2: If installing on the Ceiling: Best location is center of the ceiling (and at least 20 feet from the stove and 10 feet from the bathroom). Be at least 4 inches from the side wall and 2 feet from any inside corner. Also be at least 3 feet from any furnace vent, air conditioner, ceiling fans, or other high air flow areas.
- Why did they show using Velcro to put the smoke alarm up?
 - Answer: Commercial-grade sticky Velcro is an easy way to install a smoke alarm. If you do this, make sure you: cut a strip about 3-4 inches long, take off the smoke alarm mounting ring, place the Velcro

on the back of the unit (going along with the battery door), and give it enough time to bond to the smoke alarm and wall or ceiling (5 minutes). If you use a plunger, make sure it's clean! Instructor could demonstrate this using a smoke alarm, plunger, and Velcro. Instructor could also give copies of installation instructions from the Sleep Safe manual.

- Even with a 10 year battery, what should you do on a regular basis?
 - Answer: Test the unit, monthly
- What does it mean if your smoke alarm chirps?
 - Battery is dead or dying and needs to be replaced.
- What was the family sitting down to draw?
 - Answer: Evacuation Plan.
- Who did they involve in doing this?
 - Answer: Everybody, especially the children.
- Instructor should discuss that an evacuation plan is very important so that the family knows how to get out of the house in the event of a fire. This is especially important in homes that have foster children or others that may not be familiar with the home. Ask participants to look at the home from a child's perspective—from a height of about 3-4 feet.
- What 2 things should you do when practicing the evacuation plan?
 - Answer 1: Know the routes of escape
 - Answer 2: Know where to meet
- Is it good enough to just talk about the plan or do you really have to practice it?
 - You should practice the drill
- If you were evacuating your home during a fire or drill, where would be a good meeting place?
 - Answers can be: mailbox, house next door, shed, by the old car, by the dog's house, etc.
- Where did the family in the video go?
 - Answer: they went to the dog house.
- Ask the participants to think of this from the perspective of an elder. What would be important to consider?
 - Answer: need a clear path of travel and two exits

Video 2: "Prepare, Practice, Prevent the Unthinkable"

The following questions should be brought up with the parents (or staff) after they have viewed the tape--read the questions and then allow participants to discuss the topics. You may think of others that can be discussed during your training session. Don't read the answers unless participants get off track and need to be focused. You may also want to present the USFA Parents babies and toddlers fact sheets for discussion.

This first question can be used to get the participants at ease:

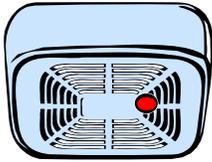
- "Did you like the video?"
 - If yes, ask "what did you like about the video?"

- Why are babies and toddlers at high risk for fire/burn injury and death?
 - Babies and toddlers are more helpless to get out of a burning house by themselves. They also tend to become frightened if there is a fire, and tend to run and hide. They have a lot of curiosity and like to play with fire-matches, lighters, candles, etc. In addition, studies show that children under age 15 are less likely to waken to the sound of a smoke alarm.

- What can you do to keep kids from playing with fire—matches, lighters, etc.?
 - Store matches, lighters, etc. out of reach—high up in a cabinet or locked.
 - Use child-resistant lighters. While not "fire-proof", these are more difficult for young children to light. They have resulted in large decreases in the number of fires started by children.
 - Educate adults and children about the dangers of playing with matches and lighters. Adults should teach children safe behaviors in the home.

- Why is it important to be prepared and practice with your family how to respond to a fire?
 - Fire can spread quickly, so it's important to be able to react and get out quickly.
 - A working smoke alarm is the single most effective thing you can do to ensure that you will know when a home fire starts. A smoke alarm gives the early warning needed to escape from a fire.
 - Children tend to hide when a fire starts. In addition, studies show that children are less likely to waken when a smoke alarm does go off. Because of this, it's important to educate children about the sound of a smoke alarm and what to do when it goes off. Have a fire escape plan and practice it!
 - It's important to have a meeting place outside where everybody goes during fire drills or real fires.

- What do you need to do to make sure that your smoke alarm will work if there is a fire?
 - Test it monthly
 - Replace batteries when needed.
 - A battery operated smoke alarm will “chirp” regularly when the battery is low and needs to be changed.
 - Otherwise, change regular batteries yearly. Long-life lithium batteries should last about 10 years, but there is no guarantee. It’s important to test them also and replace when they are not working.
 - Dust/vacuum it lightly with a hose attachment to remove dust/dirt that may affect smoke alarm performance.



Activity #3: Smoke Alarms: Types, Installation, Testing, & Maintenance

Introduction

This activity focuses on the importance of having smoke alarms in the home. The discussion will explain the importance of proper selection and also demonstrate proper location, testing, and maintenance of smoke alarms.

Materials Needed

Multiple copies of the Types of Smoke Alarms, Installing Smoke Alarms, and Testing & Maintaining Smoke Alarms handout sheets, a working smoke alarm, a computer (optional), computer projector (optional) and/or overhead projector (optional).

Action Steps – Prior to a Training Presentation

1. Read and review the information provided in the following handouts: Types of Smoke Alarms, Installing Smoke Alarms, and Testing & Maintaining Smoke Alarms.
2. Make multiple photocopies of each handout.
3. Decide what training approach you will use to present information included in handouts.

Action Steps – During a Training Presentation

4. Distribute the handouts and discuss that fire and burn injuries are preventable and that the simplest and most effective defense against fire/burn injuries from house fires is to have a working smoke alarm on every level of the home.
5. Present information from the handouts to childcare providers.
6. Present information from the handouts by:
 - Discussing that smoke alarms can be installed quickly using adhesive-backed Velcro® and a toilet plunger!
 - Explaining that this doesn't work for spray textured ceilings, in which case, the alarm needs to be installed on a wall.
 - Demonstrating how to test a smoke alarm by pressing the test button until the alarm goes off.

Training Approaches

The information in this activity can be presented by:

- Placing copies of the handout sheets into plastic sheet protectors placed into a 3 ring binder. Flip through the binder's sheets to go over the handout information during home visits or small group presentations.
- Projecting each sheet using a computer projector or by making transparencies.
- Reading the information included in the handouts aloud to participants.

There are also several other creative ways in which you can present information included in the Types of Smoke Alarms, Installing Smoke Alarms, and Testing & Maintaining Smoke Alarms handouts, including the following:

- Include this information in a Power Point presentation, inserting your own graphics and photographs.
- Consider presenting this information to audiences other than staff and childcare providers (e.g. Tribal Council or community groups).
- You can also use the information included in the handouts to create a flyer or public service announcement in collaboration with parents, caregivers or others.

Note: The Types of Smoke Alarms, Installing Smoke Alarms, and Testing & Maintaining Smoke Alarms handouts should be distributed to all families receiving smoke alarms from the Sleep Safe Program.

Types of Smoke Alarms



Sleep Safe
"Every Indian Child Goes to Sleep
in a Home Protected with a Smoke
Alarm"

There are two main types of smoke alarms available: ionization and photoelectric. Both detect smoke particles, but in slightly different ways.

Photoelectric Alarms

Pros:

- Are better at sensing smoldering fires, such as fires starting from cigarettes or fires in a mattress. Photoelectric alarms are best for homes that do a lot of frying.
- Are less likely to false alarm from cooking and so do not need the reset or "hush button" feature that some ionization buttons have.
- Are good in homes in which it is not possible to get at least a 20-foot separation between the smoke alarm and stove.

Cons:

- Photoelectric alarms are slightly more expensive and a little harder to find than ionization alarms.

Smoke alarms provided by the Sleep Safe Program are photoelectric.

Ionization Alarms

Pros:

- Are less expensive and more readily available than photoelectric alarms.
- Have a reset or "hush button" that will allow false alarms to be turned off.

Cons:

- Are more sensitive to cooking and shower steam, and will sound more false alarms than photoelectric alarms.

Smoke Alarms for the Hearing Impaired

- Persons who are hearing-impaired may not hear the sound of a regular "audible" smoke alarm.
- Smoke alarms with strobes ("visual alarms") that produce a flashing light to signal a fire alarm are designed to wake up sleeping individuals who are hearing impaired.



Kidde photoelectric alarm; type of alarm provided by the Sleep Safe Program

Installing Smoke Alarms



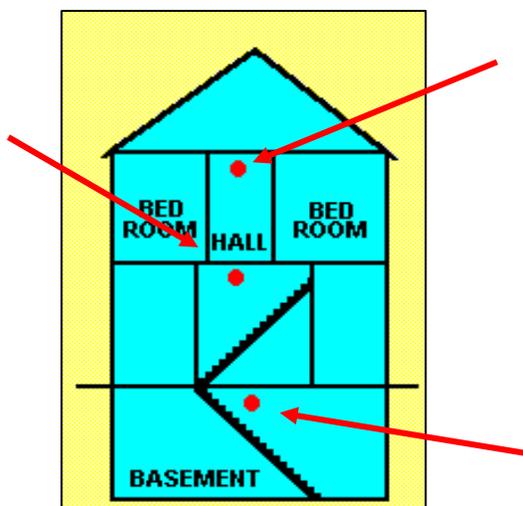
Sleep Safe
"Every Indian Child Goes to
Sleep in a Home Protected with a
Smoke Alarm"

It is very important to have a working smoke alarm installed on each level of the house, especially near the bedrooms.

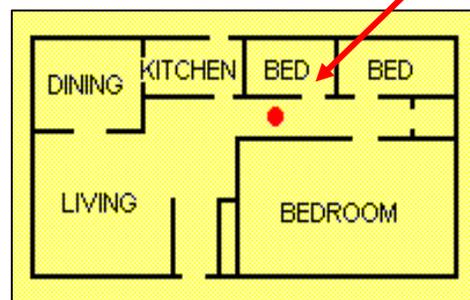
Where should I put a smoke alarm?

- At a minimum, install at least one alarm on each level, preferably near bedrooms.
- A smoke alarm is required in each bedroom of newly constructed homes. If installed in each bedroom, it is best to keep the bedroom doors open at night. If an alarm is installed in the hallway, it is best to sleep with the bedroom doors closed.
- Install alarms at least **20 feet** from the stove, **10 feet** from the bedroom, and **3 feet** from the heat/AC vent if possible to avoid false alarms.
- If installing your alarm on the ceiling, the ideal spot is in the middle of the ceiling. If you cannot place it in the middle of the ceiling, make sure to keep it **at least 4 inches** away from the corner.
- If installing your alarm on the wall, install it **at least 4 inches but no more than 12 inches** from the corner and wall come together.

Multi-Story Home

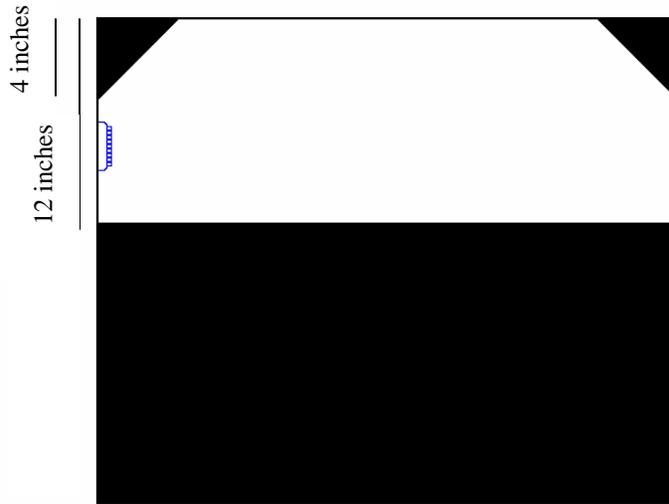


Single Level Home



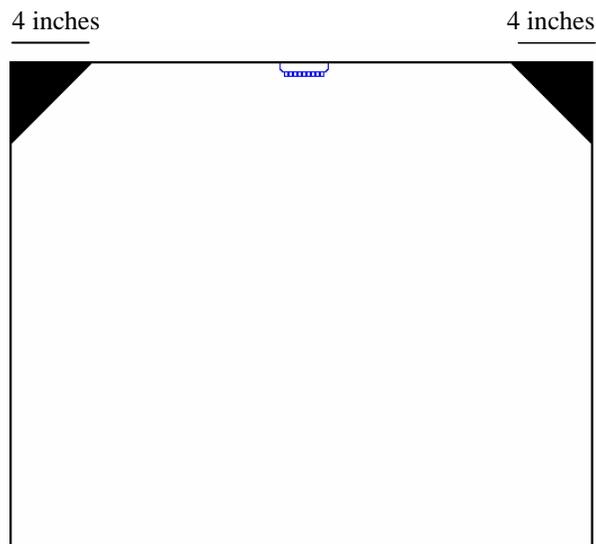
Installing Smoke Alarms Continued

Wall Placement



Place smoke alarm at least 4 inches below ceiling, but not more than 12 inches below ceiling.

Ceiling Placement



Place smoke alarm at least 4 inches away from walls, preferably in the middle of the room, if possible.

Testing & Maintaining Alarms



Sleep Safe
"Every Indian Child Goes to
Sleep in a Home Protected with a
Smoke Alarm"

Testing your alarm:

- ☛ Test your smoke alarm at least monthly (even alarms with 10-year long-life batteries need to be tested).
- ☛ Test by pressing the test button.
- ☛ For smoke alarms labeled "press and hold to test," press the test button for up to 20 seconds before the alarm sounds.
 - Note: it will probably only take a few seconds for the test alarm to sound.
- ☛ Other smoke alarms may require testing by shining a flashlight at them or using a magnet. Check your owner's manual if you are unsure how to test your alarm.



Maintaining your alarm:

- ☛ If your alarm has a regular (1-year) battery, change it once a year or if you hear the alarm making a "chirp" sound about every minute.
 - This sound indicates that the battery is low and needs to be changed.
- ☛ Sleep Safe program alarms have long life batteries that *should* last up to 10 years.
- ☛ Keep your alarms clean by vacuuming gently.

The useful life of smoke alarms is about 10 years. If your alarm is older than 10 years, it should be replaced with a new alarm.



Activity #4: Home Fire Escape Plan

Introduction

This activity focuses on the importance of drawing and practicing a home fire escape plan to save lives. This exercise can be done with any group of people (parents, children, elders, Head Start Center staff, etc.) for any building (home, school, office). Participants can work individually or in groups. Don't limit yourself to one format!

Materials Needed

Multiple copies of Plan to Get Out Alive Handout, multiple copies of Fire Escape Plan Worksheet, overhead projector (optional).

Action Steps – Prior to a Training Presentation

1. Read and review the information provided in the Plan to Get Out Alive Handout.
2. Make multiple photocopies of the Handout.

Action Steps – During a Training Presentation

1. Distribute the Plan to Get Out Alive Handout and discuss the four important steps to save a life if a smoke alarm goes off.
2. Distribute and use the Home Fire Escape Plan Worksheet to have participants draw an escape plan for their home. Tell them to draw the rooms, windows, and doors. They should put arrows through the outer exits from each room (the doors and windows), and indicate a spot outside where everyone in the house will meet.

Note: If you are working on this activity with parents/childcare providers in their home (e.g., during a home visit), have participants practice a fire drill by setting off the smoke alarm and escaping from the home.

Plan to Get Out Alive – Handout



Does everybody in your house know what to do if a smoke alarm goes off? These four steps could save your life!

1. Install smoke alarms. Keep them maintained and make sure they work.
2. Plan your fire escape route on a floor plan. Decide where to meet.
3. Discuss the fire escape plan with your family. Decide who will be in charge of small children if a fire starts.
4. Practice your escape plan at least twice a year. Make sure to practice at night and during the day. Many fires start at night, but smoke can turn a house pitch black even during the day. *Practicing drills by setting off your smoke alarms is especially important in improving young children's ability to wake from sleep during an actual fire.*

Creating an Effective Escape Plan

Follow these action steps, using the attached Home Fire Escape Plan Worksheet, to create your Home Fire Escape Plan (Note: refer to sample grid completed on page 24):

1. Draw the outline of your house and draw two exits from each room.
2. Draw your outside meeting place on the grid.

Practicing E.D.I.T.H. (Exit Drills In The Home)

Follow these action steps to practice your Home Fire Escape Plan:

1. Everybody is in his/her bedroom with the doors closed.
2. Somebody tests the smoke alarm to set off the alarm.
3. Each person feels his/her bedroom door for heat.
 - Pretend the door is cool. Use your main escape route through the door.
 - Pretend that the door is hot. Use an alternate route to escape, such as a window. Note: due to the risk of injury from a fall, it is not recommended that you actually jump from a 2nd story or higher window during a practice drill!
 - Alternate whether the door is hot or cold each time you practice.
4. Everybody meets outside in the meeting area.
5. If the smoke alarm is placed outside of the bedrooms, it is safest to sleep with the doors closed. If smoke alarms are inside the bedrooms, the doors should be left open at night.

Tot Finders – stickers placed on children's bedroom windows – are ineffective because: (1) children may not be sleeping in that room at the time of the fire; and (2) in home fires, firemen search all rooms in the house, not just those in which children may be sleeping.



Activity #4: Home Fire Escape Plan Example



This sample plan shows the details you should include on your home fire escape plan:

1. An outline of your house and all the rooms
2. Windows and doors in each room
3. Arrows that show how to get out of each room
4. An outside meeting place

