

Residential Fire H.E.L.P.

This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

I'm Dr. Ileana Arias, Director of the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

Smoke alarms decrease the chances of dying in a house fire by up to 50 percent. But one-quarter of U.S. households lack working smoke alarms. Those least likely to have an alarm are often those who are already at high risk of being injured in a fire.

When compared with the rest of the population, older adults are at much higher risk for residential fire deaths. Other groups who are disproportionately affected include the poorest Americans and those who live in rural areas.

We've found that the best way to get out into the communities and reach those who are at greatest risk is to work with partners who already have these connections. This is why we are so delighted to be partnering with the Meals on Wheels Association of America and the International Association of Fire Chiefs on the Residential Fire Homebound Elderly Lifeline Project, or Fire H.E.L.P.

Meals on Wheels volunteers provide the homebound elderly with warm, home-delivered meals and have become a trusted life-line to those they serve. Through the Fire H.E.L.P. partnership, smoke alarms will be installed in the homes of older adults who need them. But Fire H.E.L.P. goes even further by also providing these men and women with the knowledge and skills to prevent a fire in the first place.

Everyday activities, such as making a cup of tea and keeping a house warm, can become more risky in an older population. But with some simple precautions, they can be done safely. These are the messages that Fire H.E.L.P. is designed to share, and CDC is excited to be playing a role in it.

The Fire H.E.L.P. project is being pilot-tested at Meals On Wheels programs in five communities in Texas. If the project is successful, the Meals On Wheels Association of America hopes to replicate it throughout Texas and ultimately across the country.

We are pleased to add CDC's fire prevention expertise to the crucial services that Fire H.E.L.P. will provide to these communities. We believe that older adults should be able to live longer, high-quality, productive, and independent lives. And an important piece of that is promoting safe and healthy homes through projects like Fire H.E.L.P.

Thank you.

To access the most accurate and relevant health information that affects you, your family and your community, please visit www.cdc.gov.