



## Drill Bits

### Are your children safe at night?

#### National Fire Prevention Month

- Inspect your home for dangers.
- Store flammables safely.
- Use portable heaters appropriately.
- Never smoke or have open flames near combustible or flammables
- Have a plan and rehearse it
- Never turn your back on a candle or fireplace.

Smoke alarms are nothing new. In fact, nearly 96% of homes have at least one working smoke detector. The more, the better. But did you know that your children may be at risk of dying in a fire even with a working smoke detector right outside of their room? This is not a new threat, but one every parent should consider.

In several studies, children slept through a smoke detectors shrieking and to include the models that flash bright lights. Several examples show children up to fifteen years sleeping right through the alarm some even going as far as to pull a pillow over their heads. This should be alarming to all parents.

If you haven't rehearsed your fire escape plan for your home, it's past time to do so. But go beyond that and test the ability of your alarm to wake everyone in the home and your children's ability to hear, and respond appropriately. Hopefully your family is prepared and knows what to do.

If you are concerned (and you should be) there is an answer. Several models of smoke detectors allow you to record your voice, calling your children by name and giving them instructions. These have proven to be effective in many cases where a standard alarm is insufficient. These devices when activated emit your voice and directions of what to do. In an emergency situation, absent training and instructions in a clear definitive manner, fear and panic can result. This can lead to children trying to hide

under a bed or in a closet. This places the child in serious jeopardy as well as the parent who tries to stay or return to the home charged with smoke and deadly gases in an effort to rescue.

Take the time to discuss your escape plan, rehearse it and practice it during several different times of the day. Establish a definite rally point where everyone can meet and accountability is taken care of. Let your children work the plan from their perspective; you may find an error in your plan. And tell visitors of your plan.

Every year in our country, too many people are killed in home fires, those numbers really won't effect you until it is someone you know or love.

Most smoke and fire detectors/alarms have a service life of five to ten years. Be sure that you check your alarms and replace them as needed. Even if you have a wired alarm it needs to have a back up battery. That battery needs to be changed every six months.

Finally, remember that prevention trumps reconstruction.



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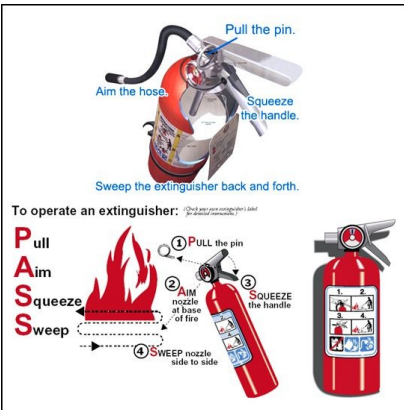
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**STOP THE  
LOSS**



*Fighting a fire may be your best option, but only if you know how.*

*The story of Mrs. O'Leary's cow starting the fire have been dispelled, and many other theories arose, but the fact remains that Oct 8, 1871 was the most devastating date involving fires in America.*



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### PASS this on for Fire Extinguisher Training

Many people think they know how to use a fire extinguisher properly, yet each year across America, thousands of people are burned while trying to fight a fire with portable fire extinguishers.

The first thing to remember is that a fire extinguisher has two main uses; fighting an incipient phase fire or to assist in egress. If a fire has just ignited and still small enough to get within 10 to 12 feet, then you may chose to use an extinguisher. If there is a fire blocking the only egress you have, you may have to use an extinguisher.

Otherwise your best bet is to retreat from the area, repeating the alarm to others on the way out.

### Fire trivia, history and understanding

Did you know that October is Fire Prevention month? Do you know why? It was due to the **Great Chicago Fire**, which was a conflagration that burned from Sunday, October 8, to early Tuesday, October 10, 1871, killing hundreds and destroying about 4 square miles in Chicago, Illinois. But did you know the **Peshtigo Fire** in Peshtigo, Wisconsin, is the conflagration that caused the most deaths by fire in United States history, killing as many as 2,500. It occurred on Oct 8, 1871 as well.

The **MGM Grand fire** occurred on November 21, 1980 at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino (now Bally's Las Vegas) in Las Vegas, Nevada. The fire killed

Using a portable fire extinguisher is easier said than done. Adrenaline, fear, heat, smoke and noise will cause anxiety and panic and many people asked after using an extinguisher have not remembered how, or even what they did with it. As in many other significant events, a person will do as they are trained when confronted with an emergency. So if you haven't already, speak to your safety officer about scheduling some fire extinguisher training.

In the mean time keep the word PASS in mind. PASS is the acronym that will aid you in fire extinguisher use. It stands for Pull, Aim, Squeeze and Sweep.

Pull the pin, it will allow the trigger to be squeezed.

Aim at the base of the fire or leading edge.

Squeeze the trigger or handle

Sweep back and forth.

Remember that the fire extinguisher has its limitations. Its size, its condition and its contents. Fire extinguishers are rated for specific fires so be sure to use there right agent on the fire. Also a fire extinguisher needs to be inspected and maintained. Make sure you are familiar with the fire extinguishers around you, at work or at home.

all employees and visitors in a business, so why not to our families. All of those things require inspection and training, but we assume our families "just know what to do".

OSHA and the National Fire Protection Assn work feverishly to protect employees in the work place. But whose job is it to protect our families? Yours!

It makes sense that we take the time to inspect our homes with the vigilance and tenacity of a municipal fire marshal. Make a plan, Practice the plan, make sure everyone at home knows what to do.

Many of today's fire codes are resulting from the tragedies mentioned, but many of the codes that protect us, are not required in the home. Building codes require smoke and fire detectors in all new construction but there is no law requiring those devices in your home. Fire extinguishers must be available to