Home Fire Preparedness Campaign
Smoke Alarm Installation

“Firefighters have long been dedicated to preventing deaths, injuries and property losses caused by fires in their communities. If we are to prevent fires, it will take more than just the fire service to initiate important fire-prevention steps.”
— Ernest Mitchell, United States Fire Administrator

Help install smoke alarms in your community!
Join the Red Cross initiative to install lifesaving smoke alarms in local neighborhoods.

Make an impact!
Help people in your community learn how to take action to reduce the risk of home fires.

Did you know?
If a fire starts in your home, you may have just two minutes to escape.

Contact your local Red Cross for assistance. You can find contact information at redcross.org.
What it is
The American Red Cross Home Fire Preparedness Campaign aims to reduce the number of home-fire deaths and injuries by 25 percent over the next five years, working with community partners and stakeholders to install smoke alarms and provide fire- and disaster-safety education in communities at risk for home fires.

How it helps
Red Cross smoke-alarm installation volunteers help their neighbors reduce the risk and affect of home fires, saving both lives and property. Smoke-alarm installation is a great opportunity for your organization to help the Red Cross to make an impact on reducing home-fire deaths and injuries while increasing your local visibility and connections with community partners.

Get started
The first step toward getting involved as smoke-alarm installation teams is to get in touch with your local Red Cross.

- All Home Visit volunteers must be at least 16 years old and have completed the appropriate training. Volunteers are encouraged to register in the Red Cross Volunteer Connection system to be covered by Red Cross insurance and indemnification policies in the unlikely event that something happens.
- Volunteer registration includes completing a volunteer application as well as a background check (ages 18 and up) or a parental consent form (ages 16 and 17).

Home Visit volunteers will be assigned to small groups and given fire-safety information as well as maps of the neighborhoods and other materials to help educate residents. The groups will assess existing smoke alarms, install alarms, and/or replace batteries where necessary. It is recommended that you use the term “smoke alarms,” not “smoke detectors,” when talking about devices.

Home Visit team descriptions and tasks
The Red Cross is seeking volunteers for the following positions within the Home Visit team:

Installer
Responsible for installing smoke alarms with the resident’s permission, and within manufacturer’s and program guidelines. The installer must have the following qualifications:

- Completed required training to conduct smoke-alarm installation
- Witnessed successful installation practice
- Can climb a ladder
- Can use needed tools

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Documenter

Responsible for:

- Ensuring the correct documentation forms are completed
- Keeping track of supplies
- Keeping track of the number of smoke alarms installed
- Ensuring the homeowner completes required documents (acknowledgment, releases, etc.)
- Completing and submitting reports within program parameters using guidance provided by your local Red Cross on homefirepreparedness.org

Safety Educator

Responsible for:

- Teaching
- Reviewing a fire-safety checklist with the resident
- Assisting the resident in completing a household-disaster plan
- Providing helpful safety information

Installation and educating the resident about disaster safety should be completed in about 20 minutes and consists of five steps:

1. Introduction / Initial Conversation: Introduce yourself, the program and ask to enter the home
2. Installation: Ensure the resident is protected with working smoke alarms
3. Education: Help the resident understand basic home-fire safety and prevention
4. Data Collection: Capture data needed to monitor and evaluate program activities
5. Closeout: Thank the resident for their time

Volunteer groups will be asked to obtain acknowledgement of services delivered and document required program data. Through the use of Web-based forms, teams will be able to report data from mobile phones or other handheld devices. A paper option for collecting data will be available, if needed. This data will be used to determine program impact and provide information for future events.

Take it to the next level

- Consider becoming involved in pre-canvassing events to let residents know when we will be in their neighborhood installing smoke alarms.
- Consider hosting a fundraiser to buy smoke alarms or batteries that can be utilized during your home-visit efforts.
- Volunteers can also hand out maps or bottled water to other volunteers throughout the event.
- If you’re involved in multiple community groups or organizations, invite them all to connect with your local Red Cross and join the local coalition.
- Convene with local home-fire preparedness coalition partners, neighborhood associations and other local entities to get recommendations and tips on the best ways to communicate within the communities.
- Take the lead in mobilizing your own neighborhood around fire preparedness. Download the Team Red Cross app from your app store. Check out the safety tips in the Fire Preparedness mission and help your family and neighbors carry them out at home.

Tell us about it

Share your feedback and stories of success with your local Red Cross. Consider sharing your personal story on redcross.org/stories to inspire others to volunteer. Just remember that a signed media release must be obtained for each person before stories, photos and videos can be posted. You can obtain a copy of the Red Cross release form from your local Red Cross office.

Resources

- Home Fire Safety
- Home Fire Response
- Team Red Cross: Volunteer App

Download the Team Red Cross app from your app store. Check out the safety tips in the Fire Preparedness mission and help your family and neighbors carry them out at home.