



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INSURANCE

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OCTOBER IS FIRE PREVENTION MONTH

What should you do if there's a fire in your home? Get Out!

Nashville, TN--The State Fire Marshal's Office reminds Tennesseans that preparing for a home fire in advance greatly increases a family's chance of survival. That means having an escape plan and practicing it.

Fire death is a serious problem in Tennessee and the State continually ranks among the five worst in fire death rate nationwide. Governor Bredesen has officially proclaimed October as Fire Prevention and Safety Month.

Here are some helpful tips to prepare for a home fire:

- *Develop a plan.* Draw a floor plan of all levels of the house; find the two best escape routes from each room; make sure each route is unobstructed and if it involves climbing through windows, make sure they are operable; review the plan with your spouse and children.
- *Know how to escape.* First, feel the door with the *back* of your hand. A hot door means a fire is on the other side and you should choose an alternate escape route. If the route is smoky, stay low and crawl along the floor where the air is safer to breathe.
- *Choose a safe meeting place.* Pick a tree or other landmark that is a safe distance from the house. All members of the family should come to this place once they get out.
- *Call 911 from a neighbor's house.* Never call from inside a burning house. Your chances of escaping decrease every second you remain inside.
- *Never go back inside a burning house.* Toys and valuables are replaceable... people aren't.
- *Practice the escape plan twice a year.* If a fire occurs, confusion will set in if the plan has not been rehearsed. There is no time to waste. Practicing will make the response to a fire become second nature.

"There are many things a person can do to reduce fire risks before a fire starts, but one of the most important things is being familiar with an escape route. Many fire deaths and injuries can be prevented simply by getting out of the house," said Tennessee State Fire Marshal Leslie A. Newman. "We urge all Tennesseans to start preparing and continue fire prevention tactics all year long."

For more information on home fire safety, visit <http://www.state.tn.us/commerce/sfm>.

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