

Fire Prevention Month 2019

October is Fire Prevention Month! The goal of Fire Prevention Month (and week October 6th – 12th) is to raise awareness about fire safety and help ensure your home and family is prepared in the event of an emergency.

In 1922, the National Fire Protection Association named the second week of October Fire Prevention Week in commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire in 1871. Today, we celebrate Fire Prevention Week and Month by raising fire safety awareness and educating families, students and communities across the United States. During this month, fire departments educate their communities, and encourage parents and loved ones to practice fire safety and whole home safety.

The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) 2019 campaign for Fire Prevention Month is "Not Every Hero Wears A Cape. Plan and Practice Your Escape." At First Alert, we are proud to support their mission and this year's theme that firefighters are heroes too. For Fire Prevention Month this year, First Alert is urging families to improve their home's safety by checking their alarms, testing the alarms regularly and adding reliable protection when replacing expired alarms.

We are dedicated to helping protect what matters most because a home emergency can happen at any time and we want you to be prepared. Fire Prevention Month is the perfect time talk with your whole family about fire safety – include testing alarms, changing the batteries or upgrading to 10-year sealed battery alarm for hassle-free protection, and escape planning.

3 of every 5 home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no working smoke alarms

Less than **50%** of homeowners have an escape plan

Carbon monoxide (CO) is the **#1** cause of accidental death

60% of consumers do not test their smoke and CO alarms monthly*

Only **47%** of people report having CO alarms in their home

Just **43%** of homeowners have an escape plan*



Are You Fully Protected?

Having functioning alarms installed throughout your home is the first line of defense for fire prevention.

They work around the clock to give your family an early alert in the event of an emergency, allowing you time to safely escape. Smoke and CO alarms should be placed on every level of the home, including the basement, as well as inside and outside each bedroom. Fire alarms should also be placed on every level of the home, especially in the kitchen and garage. First Alert has been protecting homes and families since 1958.

We urge you to practice whole home safety and add reliable protection you can trust this Fire Prevention Month.

Take this opportunity to discuss fire safety with your family. To help you, we have provided fun activities and resources below to explain fire safety to your children.

Carbon Monoxide Safety Tips

What is carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible, odorless gas. It is a common by-product of incomplete combustion, produced when fossil fuels (like oil, gas or coal) burn. Because you can't see, taste or smell it, carbon monoxide can kill you before you know it's there. Exposure to lower levels over time can make you sick.

Where does carbon monoxide come from?

Carbon monoxide can be produced by the combustion that occurs from fossil fuel burning appliances like a furnace, clothes dryer, range, oven, water heater, or space heater. When appliances and vents work properly, and there is enough fresh air in your home to allow complete combustion, the trace amounts of CO produced are typically not dangerous. And normally, CO is safely vented outside your home.

Problems may arise when something goes wrong. An appliance can malfunction, a furnace heat exchanger can crack, vents can clog, or debris may block a chimney or flue. Fireplaces, wood burning stoves, gas heaters, charcoal grills, or gas logs can produce unsafe levels of CO if they are unvented or not properly vented. Exhaust can seep into the home from vehicles left running in an attached garage. All these things can cause a CO problem in the home.

Why is carbon monoxide so dangerous?

Carbon Monoxide robs you of what you need most: oxygen, which is carried to your cells and tissue by the hemoglobin in your blood. If you inhale CO, it quickly bonds with hemoglobin and displaces oxygen. This produces a toxic compound in your blood called carboxyhemoglobin (COHb). Carboxyhemoglobin produces flu-like symptoms, for example: headaches, fatigue, nausea, dizzy spells, confusion, and irritability. Since symptoms are similar to the flu, carbon monoxide poisoning can be misdiagnosed. As levels of COHb rise, victims suffer vomiting, loss of consciousness, and eventually brain damage or death.

Who is at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning?

Everyone is at risk because everyone needs oxygen to survive. Medical experts believe some people maybe more vulnerable to CO poisoning: unborn babies, infants, children, seniors, and people with heart and lung problems due to higher metabolic rates.

How can I help protect against carbon monoxide poisoning?

Having an early warning is important. Install carbon monoxide alarms outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement, as recommended by the National Fire Protection Association. Choose a CO alarm that is tested and listed by a Nationally Accredited Lab such as ETL or UL.

Have your appliances checked regularly. Have a qualified appliance technician check all fossil fuel burning appliances, venting and chimney systems at least once a year, or as recommended by the manufacturer.

It is critical to identify potential dangers and take measures to help protect against this serious threat. We recommend following these guidelines:

- Have fuel-burning heating equipment and chimneys inspected by a qualified professional every year before cold weather arrives. During the heating season, clear filters and filtering systems of dust and dirt.
- Be sure to open the flue for adequate ventilation when using a fireplace.
- Inspect the pilot lights on natural gas appliances to ensure that the flame is blue. When a flame is mostly yellow in color, it likely is producing CO.
- Clean out the lint and debris that may build up in the clothes dryer vent which leads to the outside of the house.
- Only use generators in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors and vent openings.
- Use barbecue grills only outside and never indoors or in the garage.
- Never leave a car running in a garage, even for a couple of minutes even if the overhead garage door is open.
- Install a CO alarm outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement, as recommended by the NFPA. Ensure that the alarms are plugged all the way in the outlet or, if battery operated, have working batteries installed. For better protection go a step further and install CO alarms inside each sleeping area.
- First Alert recommends replacing CO alarms no later than every 5-7 years.

Source: [National Fire Protection Association](http://www.nfpa.org)