

Toolbox Talks

NFPA Fire Prevention Week Part 1

In preparation for **NFPA's Fire Prevention Week** October 7th-13th, this week's toolbox talk will focus on everything you need to know!

The reality is that when fire strikes, your home could be engulfed in smoke & flames in just a few minutes.

It is important to have a home fire escape plan that prepares your family to think fast & get out quickly when the smoke alarm sounds. What if your first escape route is blocked by smoke or flames? That's why having two ways out is such a key part of your plan. This year's theme, "Have 2 Ways Out!", focuses on the importance of fire escape planning & practice.

About Fire Prevention Week

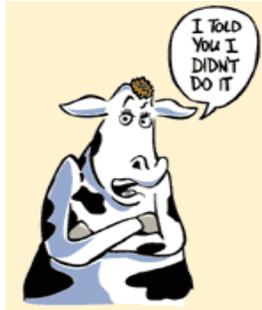
Commemorating a conflagration

Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, the tragic 1871 conflagration that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures, & burned more than 2,000 acres. The fire began on October 8, but continued into, & did most of its damage, on October 9, 1871.

According to popular legend, the fire broke out after a cow - belonging to Mrs. Catherine O'Leary - kicked over a lamp, setting first the barn, then the whole city, on fire. Chances are you've heard some version of this story yourself; people have been blaming the Great Chicago Fire on the cow & Mrs. O'Leary, for more than 130 years. But recent research by Chicago historian Robert Cromie has helped to debunk this version of events.

The 'Moo' Myth

Like any good story, the 'case of the cow' has some truth to it. The great fire almost certainly started near the barn where Mrs. O'Leary kept her five milking cows. But there is no proof that O'Leary was in the barn when the fire broke out - or that a jumpy cow sparked the blaze. Mrs. O'Leary herself swore that she'd been in bed early that night, & that the cows were also tucked in for the evening. But if a cow wasn't to blame for the huge fire, what was? Over the years, journalists & historians have offered plenty of theories. Some blamed the blaze on a couple of neighborhood boys who were near the barn sneaking cigarettes. Others believed that a neighbor of the O'Leary's may have started the fire. Some people have speculated that a fiery meteorite may have fallen to earth on October 8, starting several fires that day - in Michigan & Wisconsin, as well as in Chicago.



The biggest blaze that week

While the Great Chicago Fire was the best-known blaze to start during this fiery two-day stretch, it wasn't the biggest. That distinction goes to the Peshtigo Fire, the most devastating forest fire in American history. The fire, which also occurred on October 8th, 1871, & roared through Northeast Wisconsin, burning down 16 towns, killing 1,152 people, & scorching 1.2 million acres before it ended. Historical accounts of the fire say that the blaze began when several railroad workers clearing land for tracks unintentionally started a brush fire.

Before long, the fast-moving flames were whipping through the area 'like a tornado,' some survivors said. It was the small town of Peshtigo, Wisconsin that suffered the worst damage. Within an hour, the entire town had been destroyed.

Eight decades of fire prevention

Those who survived the Chicago & Peshtigo fires never forgot what they'd been through; both blazes produced countless tales of bravery & heroism. But the fires also changed the way that firefighters & public officials thought about fire safety. On the 40th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire, the Fire Marshals Association of North America (today known as the International Fire Marshals Association), decided that the anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire should henceforth be observed not with festivities, but in a way that would keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention. The commemoration grew incrementally official over the years.

In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation, & since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed on the Sunday through Saturday period in which October 9 falls. According to the National Archives & Records Administration's Library Information Center, Fire Prevention Week is the longest running public health & safety observance on record. The President of the United States has signed a proclamation proclaiming a national observance during that week every year since 1925.

Fast Facts About Fire

Home Fires

- One home structure fire was reported every 85 seconds in 2010.
- Most fatal fires kill one or two people. In 2010, 19 home fires killed five or more people. These 19 fires resulted in 101 deaths.
- In 2010, U.S. fire departments responded to 369,500 home structure fires. These fires caused 13,350 civilian injuries, 2,640 civilian deaths, & \$6.9 billion in direct damage.

Escape Planning

- According to an NFPA survey, only one-third of Americans have both developed & practiced a home fire escape plan.
- Almost three-quarters of Americans do have an escape plan; however, less than half actually practiced it.
- One-third of Americans households who made & estimate they thought they would have at least 6 minutes before a fire in their home would become life threatening. The time available is often less. & only 8% said their first thought on hearing a smoke alarm would be to get out!

Smoke Alarms

- Almost two-thirds (62%) of reported home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.
- Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in reported home fires in half.
- In fires considered large enough to activate the smoke alarm, hardwired alarms operated 92% of the time, while battery powered alarms operated only 77% of the time.

🔥 Toolbox Talks

🔥 NFPA Fire Prevention Week Part 2

🔥 Cooking

- Cooking has been the leading cause of reported home fires & home fire injuries since 1990. Unattended cooking was by far the leading cause of these fires; Two-thirds of home cooking fires began with ignition of cooking materials, including food, cooking oil, fat, or grease .
- Cooking caused two of every five (42%) reported home fires, roughly one of every seven (15%) home fire deaths, two of every five (37%) home fire injuries, & 11% of direct property damage from home fires in 2010.
- Ranges accounted for the 58% of home cooking fire incidents. Ovens accounted for 16%.
- Children under five face a higher risk of non-fire burns associated with cooking than being burned in a cooking fire.
- 90% of burns associated with cooking equipment resulted from contact with hot equipment or some other non-fire source.

🔥 Heating

- Heating equipment was the leading cause of reported home fires in the 1980s & has generally ranked second since then. It is the second leading cause of home fire deaths. Fires involving heating equipment peak in December, January, & February, as do deaths from these fires.
- The leading factor contributing to heating equipment fires was failure to clean, principally creosote from solid fueled heating equipment, primarily chimneys.
- Portable or fixed space heaters, including wood stoves, were involved in one-third (32%) of home heating fires & four out of five (79%) home heating deaths.
- Half of home heating fire deaths resulted from fires caused by heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses, or bedding.

🔥 Smoking Materials

- In 2010, smoking materials started an estimated 17,500 home structure fires, resulting in 540 deaths, 1,320 injuries, & \$535 million in direct property damage. Smoking materials are the leading cause of home fire deaths.
- Sleep was a factor in two of every five home smoking material fire deaths. Possible alcohol impairment was reported in one quarter of these deaths.
- In recent years, Canada & the United States have required that all cigarettes sold must be “fire safe,” that is have reduced ignition strength & less likely to start fires.

🔥 Electrical

- Half (49%) of home electrical fires involved electrical distribution or lighting equipment. Other leading types of equipment were washer or dryer, fan, portable or stationary space heater, air conditioning equipment, water heater, & range.

- In 2010, electrical failures or malfunctions were factors in an estimated 46,500 home structure fires resulting in 420 deaths, 1,520 injuries, & \$1.5 billion in property damage.

🔥 Candles

- On average, there are 35 home candle fires reported per day.
- More than one-third of these fires started in the bedroom.
- More than half of all candle fires start when things that can burn are too close to the candle.
- In 2010, candles caused 3% of home fires, 4% of home fire deaths, 6% of home fire injuries, & 5% of direct property damage from home fires.

🔥 Home Fire Sprinklers

- Automatic fire sprinkler systems cut the risk of dying in a home fire by about 83%.
- Home fire sprinklers can contain, & may even extinguish, a fire in less time than it would take the fire department to arrive on the scene.
- Sprinklers are highly effective because they react so quickly in a fire. They reduce the risk of death or injury from a fire because they dramatically reduce the heat, flames, & smoke produced, allowing people time to evacuate the home.

Crack the Code!

LEGEND

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
3	13	20	4	8	12	24	5	18	19	6	23	9	17	7	16	10	1	15	14	11	26	2	21	25	22



If the smoke alarm beeps,
even when you're asleep.
You are ready no doubt,

3	23	2	3	25	15	5	3	26	8
14	2	7	2	3	25	15	7	11	14



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Check out the
Crack the Code Game
at Sparky.org

Answers: Always have two ways out.

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