

Lifesavers

Education, drills are keys to fire fighting

Fire prevention education and fire drills are the most effective means of fire fighting, yet few people take the time to learn the proper steps that could save their lives.

Fire is one of the leading causes of

accidental death in the home each year. The statistics are staggering: In the United States, someone dies in a fire every 40 minutes, with countless others being injured. Most often,

these victims are children and the elderly. Fires are also responsible for \$2 billion in damage to homes each year.

Oct. 4-11 is National Fire Prevention Week. The American Red Cross Southeastern Michigan Chapter urges homeowners to take the time to learn fire prevention and exit drills.

Fire is the most likely disaster you and your family will experience. More than 80 percent of fires occur where there are people: in homes, apartments, motels, hotels and mobile homes.

EACH YEAR, the American Red Cross responds to 60,000 disasters. Most of these disasters are home and apartment fires. The Red Cross is ready to provide help to people who have been victims of fire.

Your local Red Cross can provide food, clothing, shelter, urgent household needs and medical assistance, depending on the needs of the persons affected by the disaster. This assistance is financed by contributions to the Red Cross, the United Foundation and United Way.

Disaster Action Team volunteers respond to the needs of fire victims, dealing personally with each family's individual situation.

Red Cross also stresses fire prevention. Since most fires occur in the hours when people are sleeping — between midnight and morning — fire safety techniques and escape plans must be practiced often

enough to become "second nature."

If you have a fire in your home and need assistance, call the American Red Cross at 833-4440.

THE RED Cross offers these fire safety tips:

● GENERAL TIPS

● Install smoke alarms — one on every floor, near a heating appliance and near the bedrooms.

● Keep gasoline and other flammable liquids stored outside the home.

● Do not smoke in bed.

● Discard oily and paint-soaked rags.

● Keep matches away from children.

● Do not overload electrical circuits.

● Never use a gas range or an oven to heat your kitchen. An unvented heating appliance is capable of producing deadly fumes. Don't leave open doors open when in use. Children could burn themselves.

● Keep an appropriate fire extinguisher on a wall away from the stove.

● During snow storms, be sure to shovel the snow away from the fire hydrant. It could save your home or that of your neighbors.

● If you suspect that any part of your house is on fire, do not open the inside door without first placing your palm against it. If it feels hot, do not open it.

● If your clothing catches fire,

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Farmington Hills firefighters demonstrate use of the Jaws of Life extrication tool on a wrecked car during last year's open house.

Fire department plans open house

Cooking safety demonstrations, a vehicle fire and rescue, precision ladder raising and climbing and a holiday safety show will highlight the Farmington Hills Fire Department's fire prevention open house Sunday, Oct. 11.

Bert & Ernie, Ronald McDonald, Robbie the Robot, Smokey T. Bear, Parky the Panda and Sparky the Fire Dog will all make appearances during the noon to 4 p.m. event at fire headquarters, 28711 Drake, north of 12 Mile. Parking will be available on Drake and in nearby subdivisions. Smokey T. Bear will arrive by helicopter at 12:30.

The family fare also will include helium balloons, movies, fire badges, a dunk tank, antique fire trucks, cartoons, blood pressure checks, a puppet show, a residential sprinkler demonstration, firefighter dress-up, refreshments and door prizes. Informational booths on health and fire safety also are planned.

The open house is part of National Fire Prevention Week Oct. 4-11. How would you escape if there was a fire in your house? What if

that escape route was blocked? You should plan two ways out of every room. And you should plan them now — before there's a fire, warns the National Fire Protection Association.

"During fire prevention week, plan and practice a family escape drill," the association suggests. Sunday's open house schedule follows:

● noon — doors open.

● 12:30 p.m. — helicopter arrival of Smokey T. Bear.

● 12:45 p.m. — cooking safety demonstration.

● 1 p.m. — vehicle fire and rescue.

● 1:15 p.m. — precision ladder raise/climb.

● 1:30 p.m. — arrival of Ronald McDonald.

● 2:30 p.m. — holiday safety show.

● 2:45 p.m. — cooking safety demonstration.

● 3 p.m. — vehicle fire/rescue.

● 3:15 p.m. — precision ladder raise/climb.

● 4 p.m. — doors close.

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