

**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY - DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY**  
**PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release:**

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**Vermont's Firefighters Remind Residents:  
Working Smoke Alarms Save Lives!**

Berlin VT – Firefighters know the importance of home fire safety. That's why the men and women of the Vermont fire service and the Vermont Division of Fire Safety encourages all Vermonters to participate in this year's Fire Prevention Week activities.

Working smoke alarms can make a life-saving difference in a fire. That's the message behind this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, "Working Smoke Alarms Save Lives: Test Yours Every Month!"

The Vermont fire service has joined forces with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the New Hampshire Upper Valley American Red Cross to remind local residents about the importance of having working smoke alarms in the home and testing them monthly.

According to the latest NFPA research, working smoke alarms increase your chance of surviving a home fire by 50%. Almost two-thirds of home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with missing or inoperable smoke alarms.

"In a fire, seconds count," said Vermont Division of Fire Safety, Director Michael Desrochers. "Roughly half of home fire deaths result from fires reported at night between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when most people are sleeping. Home smoke alarms can alert people to a fire before it spreads, giving everyone enough time to get out." Make sure you can hear the smoke alarm located in the immediate vicinity of all sleeping rooms. It does not do any good to have a working smoke alarm you cannot hear.

This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign includes the following smoke alarm messages:

- **Install photo-electric smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement.**
- **Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. This way, when one sounds, they all do.**
- **Test alarms at least monthly by pushing the test button.**

- **Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old or sooner if they don't respond properly.**
- **Make sure everyone in the home knows the sound of the smoke alarm and understands what to do and to follow the family's escape plan.**

While October is known for Fire Prevention Week, autumn also signals the beginning of the winter heating season. The Vermont Division of Fire Safety reports during the winter months there is a dramatic increase in structure fires caused by heating equipment and chimney fires. In fact, heating equipment is the leading cause of home fires in Vermont.

A few additional seasonal safety points to remember are:

- **Install Carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in the vicinity of any bedrooms. Carbon Monoxide is colorless and odorless and can only be detected with a CO alarm.**
- **Keep things that burn at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.**
- **Use fireplaces, woodstoves, heaters and furnaces properly and carefully.**
- **Get furnaces and chimneys inspected by a qualified technician once a year and cleaned or repaired if needed.**
- **Turn off portable space heaters when you get ready to sleep or if you leave the room.**

To find out more about local fire safety programs and activities, people should contact their local Fire Department on a non-emergency number or on their web page. Through local educational programs and family-oriented activities, residents can learn more about the importance of working smoke and CO alarms. Understanding how to prevent fires from starting and knowing what to do if one does break out is essential in protecting your home and your family.

For additional year round fire safety information and materials visit

Vermont Division of Fire Safety - <http://firesafety.vermont.gov>  
 Vermont & the New Hampshire Upper Valley American Red Cross <http://www.redcross.org/vt/burlington>  
 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) - <http://www.nfpa.org>  
 US Fire Administration - <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/>

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**Have a Fire Safe Day !**

*Micheal D. Greenia*

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