

# Home Fires: The Big Picture

***Home fires, and the injuries and deaths that result, are not rare and isolated events.***

Home fires happen in communities all over the country, every day. They're deadly, and they're costly. And, they can change the lives of families forever.

But they're not unavoidable. ***Home fires and fire deaths can be prevented.***

<p>Fires are <b><i>deadly.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ In the United States, a home fire claims a life every 3 hours.</li> <li>▶ Every half-hour, someone is injured in a home fire.</li> </ul>
<p>Fires are <b><i>costly.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ In 2006 alone, residential fires cost nearly \$7 billion in property damage.</li> <li>▶ Injuries related to fires and burns cost \$1.3 billion in 2000.</li> <li>▶ Fatal fire injuries cost \$66 million.</li> <li>▶ Fires and burns caused \$6.2 billion in lost productivity in 2000.</li> <li>▶ The sentimental value of lost personal items and keepsakes cannot be estimated.</li> </ul>
<p>Fires are <b><i>devastating.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A fire can destroy a home and everything in it in a matter of minutes.</li> <li>▶ Recovering from a fire can be physically and mentally draining.</li> <li>▶ The loss of personal belongings and keepsakes can be traumatic.</li> <li>▶ The loss of a home to fire can be particularly difficult for the elderly, who may have lived in a home for decades, or for young children, who have lost the safe familiarity of toys, clothes, and rooms and may be confused by the distraught adults around them.</li> </ul>
<p>Fire deaths <b><i>can happen to anyone, but some groups are at greater risk.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Young children:</b> Children younger than 5 have a higher risk of fire injury and death than older children.</li> <li>▶ <b>Older adults:</b> Adults 65 and older are twice as likely as any other age group to die in a home fire. The death rate for those 85 and older is five times the national average.</li> <li>▶ <b>African Americans and Native Americans:</b> African Americans are twice as likely to die in a fire than the general population. For American Indians, the risk of fire death is 30% higher than the general population.</li> <li>▶ <b>The poorest Americans:</b> Income level is inversely related to fire death risk, with the highest risk among the poorest population groups.</li> <li>▶ <b>People in rural areas:</b> Death rates in rural communities are more than twice the rates in large cities and more than three times higher than rates in large towns and small cities.</li> </ul>
<p>Fires and resulting deaths <b><i>can be prevented.</i></b></p>	<p>People need to know they can help prevent home fires and survive them if they happen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ By installing smoke alarms on every floor, outside every sleeping area (<i>ideally, in every sleeping area, too</i>).</li> <li>▶ By having an escape plan and practicing it with the whole family.</li> <li>▶ By practicing fire safety when cooking, smoking, using space heaters, or lighting candles.</li> </ul>
<p>Barriers make fire prevention <b><i>more difficult.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The biggest barrier to preventing fire deaths is lack of access to smoke alarms. The homes at greatest risk of deadly fires are also those least likely have working smoke alarms. Another barrier is lack of information-people can't prevent fire deaths if they don't know what to do.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Fire prevention programs can overcome barriers.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ EFD has a program to install free smoke alarms in homes at high risk for deadly fires.</li> <li>▶ EFD has free fire &amp; life safety publications, printed in English, Spanish, Russian and Ukrainian, to help our area's multicultural communities stay safe.</li> <li>▶ EFD has a Public Education Team who will, at no charge, speak to your civic group or organization about fire &amp; life safety.</li> <li>▶ Contact the Ephrata Fire Department for more information at 509-754-4666.</li> </ul>



**EPHRATA  
FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
*Multicultural Fire & Life Safety Programs*