



# State Fire Marshal asks residents to practice fire safety

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SPRINGFIELD – The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is urging residents to protect themselves and practice fire safety in their communities after an unusually high number of fire fatalities in January.

“Practicing fire safety—from testing your smoke alarms to preparing an emergency escape plan with your family—saves lives,” said State Fire Marshal Matt Perez. “Those extra steps will ensure you are prepared in case of an emergency.”

In 2017, Illinois had 131 injuries and 84 fatalities due to fire. In January of this year, Illinois had 21 injuries and 21 fatalities due to fire. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), there are more home fires in the winter months than any other season. The OSFM notes that major causes for fire fatalities in Illinois this year are home heating issues and careless use of smoking materials.

The OSFM encourages residents to be prepared and offers these tips on fire safety from the NFPA:

1. Test all smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms in your home at least once a month. Change the batteries at least twice a year.
2. Plan two ways your of the home in case of an emergency.
3. If the smoke alarm sounds, get out and stay out. If you have to escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your way out.
4. A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat and fire.
5. Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
6. Keep flammable materials away from your fireplace mantel.
7. Never use your oven to heat your home.
8. Remember to turn off portable heating devices when you leave a room or go to bed each night.

9. Never use extension cords with electric heaters.
10. Provide adequate ventilation for kerosene heaters and never refuel heater in-doors or when in use.
11. Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from any flammable or burnable material.
12. Ensure that cigarettes or other smoking materials have been put out all the way.
13. Never smoke around medical oxygen.
14. Refrain from smoking in bed.

For additional tips and checklists from the NFPA, please go to: <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Resources/Safety-tip-sheets>

The OSFM and the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance announced a free smoke alarm installation and fire safety program, Be Alarmed!, to ensure all Illinoisans have access to life-saving equipment through their local departments. For more information on the program, please go to: <https://www.ifsai.org/programs/alarms>