



# Turn And Test To Prevent Home Fire Tragedies

November 3 2020 11:29 AM



**ST. LOUIS** — Clocks were turned back this past Sunday, but the American Red Cross also recommends individuals test your smoke alarms to help protect your family from home fires — which continue to be the nation’s most frequent disaster during COVID-19.

Since January 1, Red Cross disaster workers in the Greater St. Louis area have responded to more than 400 home fires throughout the St. Louis community and surrounding counties to help more than 1,700 people with urgent needs like emergency lodging, financial assistance and recovery planning.

“The need to protect yourself from home fires hasn’t stopped during COVID-19,” said Mary Jane Thomsen, executive director, Greater St. Louis, American Red Cross. “That’s why it’s critical to have working smoke alarms, which can cut the risk of dying in a home fire by half. Now, take a few minutes to ‘turn and test’ to help keep you and your loved ones safe.”

**HOW TO ‘TURN AND TEST’** Press the button on your smoke alarms, following the manufacturer’s instructions, and replace the batteries if needed — at least once a year, if your model requires it. Also follow these steps:

- **Replace smoke alarms that are 10 years or older.** The sensor becomes less sensitive over time. Check the manufacturer’s date of your smoke alarms and follow the instructions.
- **Install smoke alarms on every level of your home,** including inside and outside bedrooms and sleeping areas.
- **Practice your two-minute escape plan.** Make sure everyone in your household can get out in less than two minutes — the amount of time you may have to escape a burning home before it’s too late. Include at least two ways to get out of every room and select a meeting spot at a safe distance away from your home, such as your neighbor’s home or landmark like a specific tree in your front yard, where everyone can meet.

Visit [redcross.org/fire](https://www.redcross.org/fire) for more information, including an escape plan to practice with your family. You can also download the free Red Cross Emergency app (search “American Red Cross” in app stores).

### ***About the American Red Cross:***

*The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org) or [cruzrojaamericana.org](https://www.cruzrojaamericana.org), or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross).*