

# **American Red Cross Of Missouri And Arkansas Helped More Than 1,000 People**

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ST. LOUIS – With brutally cold weather in recent days, the American Red Cross of Missouri and Arkansas has responded to numerous home fires that left many families without a place to stay and other daily essentials.

“Since February 1, our teams have assisted more than 1,000 people, following more than 220 fires throughout the Missouri-Arkansas region,” said Chris Harmon, Regional Disaster Officer.

In the Missouri portion of our region, of the more than 1,000 people assisted, 687 lived in the area covered by Missouri-based Red Cross chapters, which includes some border counties in Kansas and Illinois along the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

To break this down locally, the Greater St. Louis chapter Red Cross helped almost 170 people since Feb 1.

Red Cross provides immediate assistance following home fires including emergency lodging, support for food and clothing and other urgent needs, and help with recovery planning.

On average, the Missouri and Arkansas region responds to 10 to 15 fires each day.

The Red Cross recommends the following fire prevention measures:

### **Safe home heating:**

Provide at least three feet of space for all heating equipment, and never leave space heaters unattended.

Place space heaters on a level, hard and nonflammable surface, such as a ceramic tile floor. Don't place it on rugs and carpets, or near bedding and drapes; keep away children and pets.

Plug space heater power cords directly into outlets — never into an extension cord. Turn it off every time you leave the room or go to sleep.

Never use a cooking range or oven to heat your home.

Never leave a fire in the fireplace unattended. Use a glass or metal fire screen to keep fire and embers in the fireplace.

Have wood and coal stoves, fireplaces and chimneys inspected annually by a professional and cleaned if necessary.

### **Smoke alarms and fire escape plans:**

To help protect your family year-round, test your smoke alarms monthly and practice your home fire escape plan until everyone can escape in less than two minutes — the amount of time you may have to get out of a burning home before it's too late. Visit [redcross.org/fire](https://www.redcross.org/fire) for more information, including an escape plan to practice with your family.

**Fire prevention and safety checklist:** [https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/Chapters/Division\\_2/Orange\\_County/PDFs/Fire\\_Prevention\\_Safety\\_-\\_English.pdf](https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/Chapters/Division_2/Orange_County/PDFs/Fire_Prevention_Safety_-_English.pdf) (Also available in Spanish).

### **Home Fire escape plan:**

<https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/get-help/fire-safety/Home-Fire-Escape-Plan-English-Spanish.pdf>

**Download the free Red Cross Emergency app** (search “American Red Cross” in app stores).