

# **This Weekend Turn Your Clocks Back And Test Your Smoke Alarms To Prevent Home Fire Tragedies**

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ST. LOUIS — As people turn their clocks back this weekend for the end of daylight saving time, the American Red Cross asks everyone to also test their smoke alarms.

Home fires are the nation's most frequent disaster and tragically take seven lives every day in this country. Fires typically increase in winter months (November through February) as more families use space heaters and gather for the holidays to cook. Just in July and August of this year, Red Cross disaster responders in the Missouri and Arkansas region responded to more than 560 home fires. September data is still being compiled.

“It's critical to take action now to be as safe as possible as the threat of home fires increases with the holidays and cooler weather,” said Chris Harmon, Regional Disaster Officer for the Missouri-Arkansas Region. “The good news is that you can take a few simple steps during time change weekend to help protect your loved ones including testing your smoke alarms.”

During a fire, early warning from a working smoke alarm plus a fire escape plan that has been practiced regularly can save lives. As the clocks “fall back” when daylight saving time ends on Sunday, Nov. 7, it's also the perfect time to test your smoke alarms and replace the batteries if needed.

**In addition to testing your smoke alarms this weekend, follow these three steps get your home ready:**

1. Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including inside and outside bedrooms and sleeping areas.
2. Replace smoke alarms that are 10 years or older. Components such as sensors can become less sensitive over time. Follow your alarm's manufacturer instructions.
3. Practice your two-minute home fire escape plan. Make sure everyone in your household can get out in less than two minutes — that's 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.

## **HOME FIRE CAMPAIGN SAVES 1,000+ LIVES**

Since October 2014, the Red Cross Home Fire Campaign with community partners has saved at least 1,048 lives across the nation by educating families about fire safety, helping them create escape plans and installing more than 2.2 million free smoke alarms in high-risk homes across the country.

For more information, including safety tips and free resources, visit [redcross.org/homefires](https://www.redcross.org/homefires) or download the free Red Cross Emergency app by searching for ‘American Red Cross’ in app stores.

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

*The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver 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).*