

Spring Forward, Stay Safe: Red Cross Urges Smoke Alarm Checks

by Ann Vastmans
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ST. LOUIS — Daylight saving time begins on March 10 and the American Red Cross encourages everyone to test their smoke alarms as they turn their clocks forward to make sure the devices are working.

“Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a home fire in half as you only have about two minutes to get out,” said Beth Elders, Executive Director, Red Cross of Greater St. Louis. “Every second counts when there’s a home fire and the sooner an alarm alerts you to a fire, the sooner you can get to a safer place. When you turn your

clocks forward this weekend, test your smoke alarms too to help prevent a tragedy in your home.”

Since July 1, 2023, local Red Cross volunteers responded to help 2,634 people in the Greater St. Louis area affected by 762 home fires, which account for most of the about 65,000 disasters that the Red Cross responds to annually across the country.

SMOKE ALARMS When turning your clocks forward this weekend, test your smoke alarms and replace the batteries if needed. Visit redcross.org/fire for more information, including an escape plan to create and practice with your family, **or download the free Red Cross Emergency app by searching “American Red Cross” in app stores.**

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including inside and outside bedrooms and sleeping areas.
- 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.
- Practice your two-minute home fire 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.

IF YOU NEED HELP and cannot afford to purchase smoke alarms or are physically unable to install one, the Red Cross may be able to help. As part of the American Red Cross Home Fire Campaign, the Red Cross is providing a 1,000 smoke alarms to be installed this weekend by the **St. Louis Fire Department**. They will **install smoke alarms from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 9 and Sunday, March 10 in neighborhoods throughout St. Louis City**. Residents can contact their local fire department to request an alarm if they are unavailable or missed this weekend.

HOME FIRE CAMPAIGN SAVE LIVES Since October 2014, the Red Cross Home Fire Campaign, working with community partners, has saved at least **2,030** lives by educating families about fire safety, helping them create escape plans and installing free smoke alarms in high-risk areas across the country. To learn more about the campaign and how you can get involved, visit redcross.org/homefires.

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 follow us on social media.