



FIRE WISE

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OCTOBER: FIRE SAFETY GOES INSIDE

You've spent most of the year thinking about wildland fire and how to increase the chances that your home and property will survive one. Now let's go inside and think about preventing and surviving a structure fire.

Smoke alarms: Smoke alarms save lives, but only if properly installed and maintained. National statistics say that a working smoke alarm cuts your risk of dying in a fire in half, but millions of alarms don't work, most because of missing or dead batteries. Every floor of your home should have one, even the basement, and alarms should be installed outside every sleeping area. Alarms should be tested monthly, and batteries should be changed at least once a year. Never disable a smoke alarm, even when the bacon burns, and teach children what the alarm sounds like and what to do when they hear one. Replace alarms every 10 years.

Escape plans: If your home catches fire, visibility can be cut to nil in minutes. An escape plan helps. Families should plan for two exit routes per room. Pick a spot to meet,

and practice the plan monthly. Families should practice getting down on the floor with eyes closed and crawling out. Check that obstacles don't block your path and windows open. Practice checking doors for heat, and teach children not to hide during a fire.

Chimney cleaning: In Alaska, October often means firing up that wood stove for the first time in a few months. Before you do, consider cleaning that chimney. Many local fire departments have chimney brushes for public use. Inspect your chimney for damage before and after, and make sure you dispose of soot in a safe manner, just in case it is still warm. If you hire someone to clean your chimney, consider networking with neighbors for a multiple home visit.

Firewise team members to visit your home and offer advice. For more information on ways you can be FireWise, go to www.firewisekp.com contact FireWise Kenai Peninsula 260-4262 or sharon.roesch@alaska.gov.