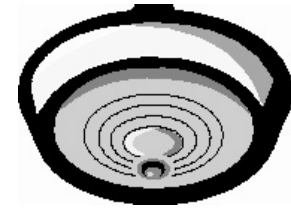


# Fire Safety for the Hearing-Impaired



## True Story

*Two hearing-impaired boys, a 7-year-old and his 10-year-old brother, were killed in a fire that started in their home at 3:30 a.m. A standard smoke alarm and batteries were found in the debris, but it was unknown if the unit had been working or if the boys would have been able to hear the alarm. The boy's mother, who is deaf, and father were seriously injured in the blaze.*

-From the Cincinnati Post

## The Facts

- There are 11 million deaf or hearing-impaired Americans who are unable to rely on the life-saving warning sound of a working smoke alarm to alert them of fire.
- Decreased hearing may limit a person's ability to take quick action and escape during a fire emergency.
- Depending on physical limitations, many of the actions an individual can take to protect him or herself from the dangers of fire may require help from a caretaker, neighbor or other outside source.

## What You Can Do

- If you or someone you know is hearing-impaired, contact your local fire department for information about obtaining a flashing or vibrating smoke alarm.
- Install a flashing or vibrating smoke alarm on every level of your home and in every sleeping area. Test all smoke alarms monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.
- Create a fire escape plan for your family and practice it monthly. Be sure to include at least two exits from every room.
- Contact your local fire department on a non-emergency telephone number and explain your special needs. Your local fire department will be able to help you with your escape plan and may also be able to perform a home inspection, as well as offer suggestions about smoke alarm placement.
- Ask emergency providers to keep your special needs information on file.

*Source: United States Fire Administration*



Safe Kids Greater Des Moines, led by Blank Children's Hospital, is a grassroots organization dedicated to preventing unintentional injury in children ages 0-14.

For more information call (515) 241-6293 or visit [www.dsmsafekids.org](http://www.dsmsafekids.org).

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