

## FACT SHEET

### CATEGORY: FIRE SAFETY TIPS

Every year 5,500 Americans die in fires and more than 30,000 are injured. Most fire deaths occur in the home and many can be prevented. Your local fire departments work to keep citizens informed and practiced in fire safety training. To protect yourself and your family it is important to understand the basic characteristics of fire.

- Fire spreads quickly; there are no time to grab valuables or make a phone call.
- In two minutes a fire can become life threatening. In five minutes a house can be engulfed in flames.
- Fire's heat and smoke are more dangerous than the flames. Inhaling the super-hot air can sear your lungs.
- Fire produces poisonous gases that make you disoriented and drowsy.
- Request and inspect of your home or business by your local fire department.
- Install smoke detectors. Place detectors on the ceiling or high on the wall of every level of your house, outside bedrooms, at the top of open stairways, at the bottom of enclosed stairs, and near (but not in) the kitchen.
- Clean and test smoke detectors once a month and replace batteries at least twice a year.
- Install a fire extinguisher in your home and teach family members how to use it.
- Plan two escape routes from every room in your home or office. Choose a place outside for everyone to meet after escaping from a fire.
- Have a practice fire drill at least once a year and teach children how to report a fire and when to use 911.
- Keep a whistle in each bedroom to awaken the household in case of fire. Teach family members to stay low to the floor (where the air is safer) when escaping from a fire.
- Teach family members never to open doors that are hot. In a fire feel the bottom of the door with the palm of your hand. If it is hot, do not open the door. Find another way out.
- Make sure windows are not nailed or painted shut.
- Safeguard your home against fires by keeping storage areas clean, checking wiring and outlets, and using caution with flammable liquids and materials.

By following these tips you can greatly improve your ability to survive a fire should one occur. For more information contact the St. Clair County Office of Emergency Management at 810-989-6965.