

- Emergency Preparedness  
Enrique Morales, County Ambassador, Macy 4-H Club

Did you know that if a fire starts in your home you may have as little as two minutes to escape? During a fire, early warning from a working smoke alarm plus a fire escape plan that has been practiced regularly can save lives.

There are multiple steps to ensure your family's safety in a fire. For example, installing smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas. You should also test smoke alarms every month. If they're not working, change the batteries. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen, at least 10 feet from the stove, to reduce false alarms. It's also recommended to use special alarms with strobe lights and bed shakers for people who are hard of hearing or deaf. About three out of five fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or working smoke alarms. This means the most effective way to plan for a fire is to have a working smoke alarm. Talk with all family members about a fire escape plan and practice the plan twice a year. This will help you react calmly in an emergency. Cooking fires, Heating System malfunctions, and Electrical issues are the three leading causes of fires in the US, so it's important to stay alert, and have a plan in case of a fire.