



Inland Northwest Chapter  
315 W. Nora Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99205  
[www.SpokaneRedCross.org](http://www.SpokaneRedCross.org)

## News Release NEWS RELEASE

**Contact: Megan Snow**  
(509) 326-3330 ext. 218 or  
(509) 990-0969 (cell)  
[snowm@spokaneredcross.org](mailto:snowm@spokaneredcross.org)

### Local Red Cross Urges Residents to Follow Fire Safety Tips

**[SPOKANE] Washington, July 9, 2009** – Over the last few weeks, volunteers from the American Red Cross Inland Northwest Chapter have responded to several house and apartment fires including three separate incidents over the last 24 hours. This response rate is significantly higher than the local Chapter's typical response of one disaster every 48 hours.

The Inland Northwest Chapter urges residents to follow these safety tips to help their families prepare for unexpected house fires before disaster occurs:

#### *Make Your Home Fire Safe*

- **Smoke alarms save lives.** Install a smoke alarm outside each sleeping area and on each level of your home. If people sleep with doors closed, install smoke alarms inside of sleeping areas.
- Use the test button to check each smoke alarm once a month. When necessary, replace batteries immediately. Replace all batteries at least once a year.
- Smoke alarms become less sensitive over time. Replace your smoke alarms every ten years.
- Consider having one or more working fire extinguishers in your home.
- Do not leave lit candles or smoking devices unattended.
- Do not place any items such as clothing or paper on top of power strips or electrical devices. These devices can overheat or spark and ignite nearby objects.

#### *Plan Your Escape Routes*

- Determine at least two ways to escape from every room of your home.
- Consider escape ladders for sleeping areas on the second or third floor. Learn how to use them and store them near the window.
- Select a location outside your home where everyone would meet after escaping.
- **Practice your escape plan at least twice a year. Now is a good time to practice as kids are out of school.**

#### *Escape Safely*

- Once you are out, stay out! Call the fire department from a neighbor's home.
- If you see smoke or fire in your first escape route, use your second way out. If you must exit through smoke, crawl low under the smoke to your exit.
- If you are escaping through a closed door, feel the door before opening it. If it is warm, use your second way out.
- If smoke, heat, or flames block your exit routes, stay in the room with the door closed. Signal for help using a bright-colored cloth at the window. If there is a telephone in the room, call the fire department and tell them where you are.

All American Red Cross support such as lodging and assistance with food and clothing is provided at no cost to those impacted by a disaster. Due to the sudden increase in local disasters, the public is encouraged to support Red Cross relief efforts by making a donation online at [www.spokaneredcross.org](http://www.spokaneredcross.org) or by calling 509-326-3330 x 217.

Please contact Megan Snow, Director of Communications and Marketing, at 509-990-0969 for further information.

**About the American Red Cross**

*The American Red Cross helps people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. Last year, some 500,000 volunteers and 35,000 employees helped victims of over 70,000 disasters; taught lifesaving skills to ten million participants; and helped U.S. service members separated from their families stay connected. Almost four million people gave blood through the Red Cross, the largest supplier of blood and blood products in the United States. The American Red Cross is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An average of 90 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs. The Red Cross is not a government agency; it relies on donations of time, money, and blood to do its work.*

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