

Lesson Plan:

Home Fire Safety – Teens Who Care for Themselves and Others in the Home

Audience: Early Adolescents

By the end of the lesson, the participants will be able to:

- view fire safe behaviors as an important part of gaining independence and responsibility
- describe at least 5 important home fire safety actions for teens who stay home alone

A note about audience:

While this lesson plan is intended for school students in grades 6-8, it may be useful anywhere a life safety educator is meeting with young adolescents: after school programs, scouting events, babysitter trainings, religious youth group gatherings, peer leader coaching, etc...

Step 1: Introduction (5 Minutes)

- Introduce yourself, explain your connection to the community, and your role with the fire department.
- Establish the rules early to help connect with the young audience and maintain control. Let students know they should pay attention to the speaker at all times and be respectful during the lesson. Inform students that they can ask questions but they need to signal and be called on first.
- Let the classroom teacher know that you will need them to be present and assist as needed.

HOOK: Ask: “How old do you think kids should be before they are allowed to stay home alone?”

List students’ responses on the board.

Give students a short amount of time to consider the question and then ask volunteers for answers.

Review some of the answers that were given and then ask “Why do you select this age?”. Encourage students to share the reasons why they think kids should be 10, 12, 15 (or whatever age they selected) before they stay home alone.

Ask for a few answers from students and then bring the idea of fire safety into the discussion. Ask students if they thought about fire safety when selecting their answers.

Step 2: Body of the Lesson (20 minutes)

Let students know that there isn’t one right answer to this question. People are all different and some kids are responsible enough to stay home alone at younger ages than others. Some will be ready to watch younger kids while others need more time to be ready for that.

An important factor in determining if a kid is old enough to stay home alone is whether or not they are able to stay safe from fires in the home.



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Ask students to predict which fire safety behaviors would be important for kids who stay home alone. Make a list of the suggestions they provide. Use the opportunity to review basic fire safety behaviors not included on the list.

Be sure to make the discussion interactive with lots of questions and to correct any misconceptions. Sample questions are included below. Review the *NFPA Educational Messages Advisory Committee (EMAC) Desk Reference* to ensure you are providing current and accurate fire safety messages.

Some core fire safety behaviors to cover include:

- Have a home escape plan with an outside meeting place; Know that the sound of a smoke alarm is a signal to get out of the house; Be able to unlock all doors and windows that could be used as emergency exits. (Review EMAC Chapter on Home Fire Escape.)
Ask: What sound does a smoke alarm make? What are some examples of outside meeting places?
- Only use the stove, oven or microwave if you have been taught how. Stay in the kitchen while cooking. Keep anything that can burn away from the stove. If cooking on the stove, keep a pan lid close by. If a pan catches fire, slide the lid over the pan to put out the fire and turn off the burner. If younger children are in the home, keep them at least 3 feet (1 meter) away from the stove, oven or microwave. (Review EMAC Chapter on Cooking.)
Ask: Why do the flames go out when a person slides a lid over a burning pan?
- Know how and when to get help: What is an emergency? Have access to a phone and know how to call 9-1-1. (Review EMAC Chapter on Home Fire Escape.)
Ask: What information should you share with the dispatcher if you need to call 9-1-1.
- Do not use matches or lighters. Keep them away from young children. (Review EMAC Chapter on Matches and Lighters.)
Ask: What should you do if you see matches on the counter when you are babysitting?
- If you have space heaters in your home, give them space! Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet (1 meter) away from space heaters. (Review EMAC Chapter on Heating.)
Ask: Besides a space heater, what are some other things in the home that need at least 3 feet (1 meter) of open space?
- If you get burned while cooking, run the burn under cool water for 3-5 minutes. Call an adult to let them know what happened so they can determine if medical attention is needed. (Review EMAC Chapter on Burns.)
Ask: Why is it important to ask an adult if a burn needs to be seen by a doctor?

You should learn and practice these behaviors when there are adults present so that you are prepared when you are home alone.

Remember that if there is a fire, your only job is to get yourself and other children out of the home to safety.

- Don't try to locate the fire.
- Don't gather belongings.
- Get everyone out first and then call the fire department.



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Step 3: Conclusion (3–5 minutes)

- REVIEW: Ask students to list 5 behaviors that will help them stay safe from fire at home.
- REMIND students that learning to make safe choices takes time. If they make a mistake, they must commit to taking responsibility and getting help if something goes wrong.
- ENCOURAGE the students to practice these skills when adults are home so they are ready for the responsibility when the time comes to stay home alone.
- THANK the students for being attentive and respectful.
- THANK the teacher for allowing you to come in and address the students.

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