

Mastering the 10-Minute Mini-Lesson



Topic: Get to Know Smoke Alarms

Audience: Adults who would benefit from basic information about smoke alarms. This may include newcomers to the U.S., people whose primary language is one other than English, or those who have very limited experience with smoke alarms in the home.

Lesson Objective: By the end of the mini-lesson, attendees will be able to explain why every home should have working smoke alarms.

Materials: “Get to Know Smoke Alarms” handouts in the appropriate languages, sample smoke alarms

Educational Messages to Review

Ch. 1: Home Smoke Alarms

- 1.1.1 Working smoke alarms save lives, cutting the risk of dying in a home fire in half. Smoke alarms should be installed and maintained in every home.

Before the mini-lesson, review the **Getting to know your audience** information. Prior to the lesson, display various sample smoke alarms where attendees can see them.

Step 1: Introduction (1–2 Minutes)

- Greet the participants and thank them for allowing you to speak for 10 minutes. Let them know you are happy to be there.
- Introduce yourself and share your connection to the community.
- HOOK: Hold up a smoke alarm and inform the group you will be talking about home fire safety. Let attendees know that smoke alarms come in different shapes and sizes but they all do an important job.

Step 2: Body (7–8 minutes)

- Pass out the *Get to Know Smoke Alarms* handout in the appropriate languages along with a pen or pencil for each person.
- Explain each box using the talking points, questions, and demonstrations below:
 1. *If there is a fire in your home, there will be smoke.* Inform attendees that smoke is dangerous and makes it hard to breathe.
 2. *A smoke alarm will let you know there is a fire in your home.* Early warning is very important in a fire. People need to escape quickly.
Ask: What sound does the smoke alarm make? Demonstrate the temporal three sound of the alarm: “Beep, Beep, Beep” pause “Beep, Beep, Beep” pause. Warn attendees and then push the test button on one of the samples so they hear the sound the alarm makes.
 3. *You need a smoke alarm in each bedroom. You also need one outside each sleeping area.* Fire often happens when people are sleeping. Smoke alarms are needed to help people wake and escape quickly. Place smoke alarms outside bedrooms and in any location where people sleep. For example, if someone sleeps on the couch, there should be a smoke alarm there.
Ask: Where are some places in your home, other than bedrooms, that people sleep? Remind attendees smoke alarms should be placed near all of the areas mentioned.
 4. *You need a smoke alarm on each level of your home.* In the picture in the handout, there is a basement, a main living level, and a bedroom level. Ask volunteers to point out smoke alarms in the picture and identify at least one alarm on each level.



Your Source for SAFETY Information

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5. *Push the test button at least once a month to make sure it is working.* If the smoke alarm does not sound when tested, install a fresh battery. If it still does not work, replace the alarm.
 6. *Smoke alarms need a new battery once a year. Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.*
A chirping noise means the battery or the entire alarm needs to be replaced.
 7. *If the smoke alarm sounds, get outside the home.* Everyone in the home should know where to meet outside if the alarm sounds.
Ask: What would make a good meeting place outside your home?
 8. *Then call the fire department. Dial 9-1-1.* Reinforce the message to go to the outdoor meeting place first and then call 9-1-1 on a mobile phone or a neighbor's phone.
- Inform attendees that another important smoke alarm tip is: *Don't Wait — Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years.* Smoke alarms have an expiration date. Look on the back of the alarm to find the date it was manufactured. Replace all alarms when they are 10 years old.

Step 3: Conclusion (1–2 minutes)

- Thank the attendees for allowing you to speak to them for a short time.
- Tell attendees that there is more to learn about smoke alarms and you would be happy to talk with them after the presentation or another time.
- Let them know that you are available to help them learn everything they need to know about smoke alarms and home fire safety.
- Share your contact information and encourage attendees to reach out with questions.

Getting to know your audience

Are the attendees familiar with home smoke alarms or is this new information?

What is the primary language spoken by attendees?

Should you invite a translator to the mini-lesson?

Would it be valuable to invite a respected community leader to help your attendees feel comfortable?

Are the attendees newcomers to the U.S.? If so, do you know if there are regulations regarding smoke alarms in their home countries?

Be careful about language and assumptions

- Remember that many devices have an annoying sound to indicate malfunction. Help attendees understand the smoke alarm sound (“Beep, Beep, Beep”) is a warning and it tells people to quickly get outside to escape smoke or fire.
- When the smoke alarm goes **off**, it makes a “Beep, Beep, Beep” sound. (The “Beep, Beep, Beep” is a warning that there is smoke in the air. The smoke alarm is always “on” working to sense smoke. We test it each month to make sure it does not go “off”.)
- You need a smoke alarm on every **floor** of your home. (Smoke alarms should be on or close to the ceiling not on the floor. Use the word “level” rather than “floor”.)

Remind attendees about the 2016 Fire Prevention Week Theme: *Don't Wait — Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years.* Smoke alarms have an expiration date. Look on the back of the alarm to find the date it was manufactured. Replace all alarms when they are 10 years old.



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