

# S.A.F.E. Family Program Fire Department Information Package



The Manitoba government, Office of the Fire Commissioner and the Manitoba Firefighters' Burn Fund are once again teaming up to offer the Smoke Alarm For Every Family (S.A.F.E.) Family program, and are encouraging all Manitoba fire departments to take part in the province-wide program.

Implementing a smoke alarm installation program throughout Manitoba can make a difference by reducing injuries and/or deaths in a fire. Smoke alarms are the life-saving success story of the past 30+ years. According to statistics from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), each year, three out of five home fire deaths result from fires in homes with either no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

The approach to an installation program is simple: Fire departments across Manitoba promote the S.A.F.E. Family Program in their community using the supplied material and identify homes that have the most at-risk citizens. These citizens include older adults, new Manitobans, young children, people with disabilities and low-income families. Fire department personnel will visit the eligible homes and install smoke alarms in hallways outside of bedrooms (with a maximum of two smoke alarms per home) and complete a smoke alarm check on any other alarms in the home to ensure they are in working order. By installing and checking smoke alarms in homes, residents and communities will be safer.

Once the fire department has completed their campaign and determined which homes are eligible, they complete the S.A.F.E. Family application form and email it to the Office of the Fire Commissioner at: [firesafety@gov.mb.ca](mailto:firesafety@gov.mb.ca).

There will be a limit of 48 smoke alarms per department per application. All smoke alarms must be installed in eligible homes, and all required paperwork is to be submitted to the Office of the Fire Commissioner within six months after all installations are completed. Prior to smoke alarms being issued, departments are asked to ensure all paperwork from previous installations is submitted.

## Some smoke alarm facts:

- The risk of dying in a reported home fire is reduced by 50 per cent in homes with working smoke alarms.
- When smoke alarms fail, most of the time it's because of missing, disconnected or dead batteries.



Delivered in partnership  
with the Manitoba fire service.

Manitoba 

## Planning for Success

Here are some components of good program development:

### 1. Establish Goals and Outcomes

**Goals:** the goal of the program should simply state ‘the long term result of the S.A.F.E. Family program will be that every home in the community will be protected by working smoke alarms in accordance with Manitoba Fire Code requirements.’”

**Outcomes:** program outcomes should be established to track progress toward the goal. These projected outcomes will provide a measure by which the success of the program can be gauged. The important thing to remember about outcomes is that they must be realistic, specific and measurable. Outcomes should be reviewed each year and revised, as necessary.

#### Examples of Program Outcomes

- 33 per cent increase in the number of homes in compliance with smoke alarm requirements.
- 50 per cent increase in the number of residents receiving information about smoke alarms and home escape planning.

### 2. Select appropriate activities

The activities that will form the core of the smoke alarm program should be established in accordance with the needs and circumstances of the community. Determining what those needs and circumstances are involves an examination and analysis of local demographics, and past residential fire experience.

Some things to consider:

- **Establish appropriate dates and times:** many homeowners are not available during working hours from Monday through Friday. Therefore, consider conducting the program during evening hours and weekends. Try to avoid holidays and other special events that may be scheduled in the community.
- **Identify the priority areas:** the simplified risk assessment will assist in selecting target areas to begin the program by identifying, for example, the area with the highest incidence of fires or with the greatest potential of injuries or deaths resulting from fires. Another option is to select an area of the community with older homes that may be less likely to be equipped with the requisite number of working smoke alarms. Other target areas might include those with high concentrations of seniors. Efforts should always be made to contact all occupants in each of the dwellings you have targeted.
- **Promote the program:** use local media to inform the community about the smoke alarm program. It is important to make residents aware of how the program works, including their responsibilities for providing and maintaining smoke alarms. Try to avoid surprise visits to homes. Make every attempt to inform the residents in the target areas of the approximate dates and times during which the program will be conducted. Sample public service announcement material is available to use to promote your program.

### 3. Obtain materials and resources

Obtain and review your S.A.F.E. Family resources and handout material. If you require additional information, please make certain that you have enough copies for all selected homes. You want to make sure you are consistent with your messaging throughout your target area.

### 4. Train the program team

It is important that all fire department and community volunteers involved in the delivery of the smoke alarm program receive adequate and consistent training before the program's initial implementation. The following is a suggested outline of topics that should be covered in a training session:

- Review the smoke alarm requirements of the Manitoba Fire Code.
- Review the fire department's policy and/or standard operating guidelines.
- Review the program's goals and outcomes.
- Discuss actions to take on discovery of non-compliance (for homeowners, landlords and tenants).
- Discuss actions to take if denied entry into a dwelling.
- Review the various types and features of smoke alarms.
- Demonstrate and practice smoke alarm installation and testing procedures.
- Discuss how to effectively interact with homeowners/occupants.
- Review educational materials to be distributed during home visits.
- Review the waiver form and demonstrate its use.
- Review the Installation Summary Form and demonstrate its use.

### 5. Develop a Standard Operating Guideline

As with other fire department activities, a standard operating guideline (SOG) should be developed and implemented for the S.A.F.E. Family program. Fire departments should ensure that their smoke alarm program is reflected in the fire department's establishing and regulating by-law and any council-approved fire prevention policies that set the expected level of service.

### 6. Monitor and evaluate

Ongoing evaluation is an essential component that will help to ensure the program is meeting its intended outcomes and continues to be effective and relevant. The outcomes established during the planning phase will provide the measures against which the program's effectiveness can be gauged. In order to evaluate the program, appropriate data must be collected and analyzed. Sample forms are included.

- **Installation Summary Form:** this form should be completed for every residence at which the fire department has installed a smoke alarm and/or conducts a smoke alarm check, to get an accurate picture of the results of the home smoke alarm program. Completed forms must be submitted to the Office of the Fire Commissioner, as well as kept on file at the fire department for future use.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will highlight areas of the program that need revision and indicate where future efforts need to be focused. It will also help with future planning and partnerships to ensure a successful program.

## Public Awareness

A crucial component of any smoke alarm program is ensuring the public is aware of their responsibilities regarding smoke alarm requirements, installation and maintenance.

Conducting door-to-door checks and installations is a tried-and-true method. Door-to-door programs should be conducted during specific times of the year. A successful education campaign needs continual reinforcement – ensure the message is heard repeatedly and in different ways. In order to reach as many people as efficiently as possible, some of the following activities should become integral components of the program.

## Use the Media

Local or regional media are definitely an effective way to publicize the events and activities associated with your smoke alarm program. The media can quickly reach vast numbers of people with very little effort or resources required on the part of the fire department.

Local or regional newspapers, radio, television and cable companies are usually willing to help the fire department promote programs and provide information to the public. Local media often welcome the opportunity to co-operatively develop events or contests that will enhance their programming as well as educate the public. Some methods of using the media to promote S.A.F.E. Family program activities include:

- **Public Service Announcements (PSAs)** Smoke alarm PSAs for television, radio and print media are available. Local media will usually be responsive to a request from their fire department to use the PSAs whenever possible. PSAs can be used all year long, with special consideration being given during Fire Prevention Week, the high-risk holiday season and during the S.A.F.E. Family campaign in your community.
- **Issue news releases** or articles about incidents related to smoke alarms. Be prepared to issue news releases immediately following any major incidents. It may not be possible to release details about that particular fire, but public education messages about smoke alarms and other fire safety matters will have greater impact when linked to a specific event.
- **Inform the community** about the S.A.F.E. Family program. When crews will be going door-to-door to conduct smoke alarm checks and install alarms, make sure residents in those areas are notified in advance. Be sure to let them know what they can expect when they open the door, so there are no surprises.
- **Publicize program results** statistics obtained through the program can be provided to local media to reinforce smoke alarm awareness. For example, it could be noted that it is very alarming that there was a high percentage of homes without working smoke alarms among the properties visited.

## Distribute Information Materials

Brochures, information cards and fact sheets can be distributed or made available to residents of the community all year long:

- during door-to-door smoke alarm checks
- on local and regional utility and tax bills
- in local newspapers, community calendars and other community publications
- at fire halls, libraries, arenas, mall displays and public information boards
- through community and social agencies, clubs or other interest groups
- to boy scouts/girl guides groups or meals on wheels drivers
- at participating retail establishments

## Deliver Fire Safety Presentations

Most fire departments are requested to deliver fire safety presentations by various groups in the community. Whether addressing older adults, adults or children, it is always appropriate to include smoke alarm and home fire escape planning information.

## Seek the Support of the Schools

Children can be great safety advocates and often have considerable influence over their parents and families. Be sure to ask schools to send the Smoke Alarms Save Lives! handout home with their students. Teachers will greatly appreciate the fire department providing enough copies for the entire class. To add fun and incentive, consider offering a prize to the classroom that returns the most forms.

## Include Home Fire Escape Planning

Every smoke alarm program should include information about home fire escape planning. Early warning is only effective if residents know what to do when the alarm sounds.

## Consider Carbon Monoxide Awareness

Fire departments may choose to incorporate carbon monoxide awareness into their program.

## Questions?

For more information, contact:

Manitoba Municipal Relations  
c/o Office of the Fire Commissioner  
1601 Van Horne Avenue East  
Brandon MB R7A 7K2

**Toll Free:** 1-888-253-1488

**Email:** [firesafety@gov.mb.ca](mailto:firesafety@gov.mb.ca)