



# Safety Bulletin



## National Fire Prevention Week October 9–15, 2022 Theme: “Fire Won’t Wait. Plan Your Escape”

This year marks the 100th anniversary of Fire Prevention Week.

Fire Prevention Week will take place October 9–15, 2022. The theme for this year, “Fire Won’t Wait. Plan Your Escape” reinforces the critical importance of developing a home escape plan with all members of the household and practicing it regularly.

### Fire Prevention Background

National Fire Prevention Week is celebrated each year during the week of October 9 in commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire in 1871. The incident began the night of October 8 of that year in a barn owned by Patrick and Catherine O’Leary. Though historians are uncertain of how the blaze actually began, local legend says it was sparked when a cow kicked over a lantern. Regardless of the actual cause, the result was devastating damage.

This horrific conflagration killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed over 17,400 structures, and burned more than 2,000 acres of land.

Ironically, the fire cleared the way for a newer, much improved Chicago. Ten years after the fire, the city population had nearly doubled. Twenty years later, the Windy City was home to over 1 million people and featured the world’s first true skyscrapers. The site where the O’Leary barn once stood now hosts the training academy of the Chicago Fire Department.

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## The Importance of Prevention

- Every year, almost 4,000 people die and 2,000 are seriously injured in house fires. (USA)
- Around 80% of all civilian fire deaths happen in the home.
- Adults aged 65 and up are over twice as likely to die in fires than younger people.
- Having functional smoke detectors more than doubles a person's chances of surviving a house fire.
- It can take just 3-1/2 minutes for the heat from a house fire to top 593°C (1,100°F).
- In a house fire, rooms that are not actively burning can still reach temperatures of over 148°C (300°F), which can result in fatalities.
- Improperly extinguished cigarettes are the leading cause of fire deaths (USA)

For more information as well as templates and resources, please visit the [National Fire Protection Association's](https://www.nfpa.org) website.



**Fire won't wait.  
Plan your escape.**

**FIRE PREVENTION WEEK™**

**fpw.org**

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