

# Coffee Time: A Safety Conversation

THOUGHTFUL  
30

## Topic: Hear the Beep Where You Sleep

**Audience:** Adults in a casual setting such as a coffee shop, library, fire station, town hall, etc.

**Lesson Objective:** By the end of the lesson, participants will:

- be able to identify locations in the home where it is important to have a working smoke alarm.
- value the importance of working smoke alarms in all sleeping areas.

## Step 1: Introduction (5–6 Minutes)

- Provide comfortable seating for conversation. To help connect with participants, use name tags. Provide coffee or another beverage for attendees.
- Greet participants and thank them for their time. Share your connection to the community. Let attendees know you are happy to help them learn more about the importance of working smoke alarms in the home. Tell them this is an informal conversation and they should feel free to ask questions at any time.
- HOOK: Tell the participants that you are ready for an extra cup of coffee. Let them know that you didn't sleep well the night before because a noise kept you awake (partner snoring, a police siren, loud wind, baby crying, dog barking — choose what works for you.) Talk about how you can usually sleep through these noises but for some reason, it woke you up last night.
- Ask people in the group if they can relate and have a brief conversation about noises folks can and cannot sleep through. Be sure someone brings up examples of times people have been able to stay asleep even through loud noises.
- Bring the conversation back around to the purpose of the coffee time. "Each year, too many people die in home fires that could have been detected by working smoke alarms. Many of these deaths happen at night when people are asleep. Smoke alarms need to be installed throughout the home, including the bedrooms and other rooms where people sleep. Let's spend some time talking about the importance of working smoke alarms in your home."

## Educational Messages to Review:

### MAIN MESSAGES

- 1.2.1 Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of the home, including the basement. Larger homes may require additional smoke alarms to provide a minimum level of protection.
- 1.2.2 Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home for the best protection. When one sounds, they all sound. Make sure you can hear the sound of the smoke alarm.

### SUPPORTING MESSAGES

- 1.3.1 Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button.
- 1.3.2 Make sure everyone in the home understands the sound of the smoke alarm and knows how to respond.
- 1.4.1 Install smoke alarms and alert devices that meet the needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- 1.6.1 Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.



Your Source for SAFETY Information

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[www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education)

## Step 2: Body of the Presentation (20–25 minutes)

Share the concept: “Hear the beep where you sleep.”

**Ask:** *Who has heard the phrase, “Hear the beep where you sleep”?*

INFORM attendees that “Hear the beep where you sleep” is the National Fire Protection Association’s Fire Prevention Week theme for 2015, and it was chosen to remind people to have a working smoke alarm wherever they sleep. A working smoke alarm in sleeping areas increases the chances of escaping a home fire. Family members have a better chance of waking and getting outside quickly.

**Ask:** *In the event of a home fire, how much time do you think you have to get outside safely?*

EXPLAIN that people may have only 1–2 minutes to escape once the alarm sounds. This means it is important to hear the alarm as soon as it sounds and react quickly. If the smoke alarm is not near the sleeping area, it may take longer to wake someone and limit reaction time.

**Ask:** *Where do people sleep in your home (bedroom, sofa, recliner, favorite chair, etc.)?*

EXPLAIN the importance of installing a smoke alarm wherever family members might sleep. In addition to the bedrooms, smoke alarms need to be present in any room family members typically sleep. If you doze on the living room sofa in the afternoon, there should be a smoke alarm close by. If your teenager likes to crash in the basement, make sure there is a working smoke alarm.

DEMONSTRATE wireless smoke alarm technology. Ask an attendee to hold one smoke alarm. Another attendee can hold the second alarm. Have one person push the test button. Explain that the wireless technology makes the two smoke alarms listen to each other. So, when one smoke alarm sounds, they all sound. These are called interconnected smoke alarms. For the best protection, your smoke alarms should be interconnected. This can be done with the wireless smoke alarms or an electrician can install hard-wired smoke alarms throughout your home.

**Ask:** *Why do you think interconnected smoke alarms are important?*

If the smoke alarm in one area of the home sounds, all of the interconnected alarms will also sound. For example, if someone is sleeping on the second floor and the smoke alarm in the basement sounds, the smoke alarms two floors up will sound, too. This provides extra time to safely escape the home if there is a fire.

**Ask:** *Does anyone sleep behind a closed door?*

If family members sleep behind closed doors, it is especially important to have interconnected smoke alarms so the alarm sounds in the sleeping area as early as possible.

REMINDE attendees of this basic guideline: Install working smoke alarms in every sleeping room, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement. Interconnected smoke alarms are best.

**Ask:** *Besides “Hear the beep where you sleep”, what are some other important guidelines related to smoke alarms?*

SOLICIT answers from the participants and cover the following points during the conversation:

- Everyone in the home should know the sound of the smoke alarm: a temporal three sound: beep, beep, beep, pause, beep, beep, pause. If the smoke alarms make this sound, get outside, stay outside and call the fire department from outside the home.
- If there is someone in the home who does not hear well, investigate smoke alarm accessories to assist someone who is hard-of-hearing. These accessories use vibration, flashing lights, or low-pitched sound to alert people the alarm is sounding.
- A smoke alarm can make another sound – a chirp. This is a sound that will happen every few minutes. It can be annoying, but it is telling you that you need to change the battery. Never ignore a chirping alarm. Replace the battery right away. Ask for help from a neighbor, relative or even the fire department if needed.



- Smoke alarms need to be tested every month. Push the test button. If you can't test your alarms, ask for help. Put a reminder on your calendar so you have a set day each month to test the smoke alarms.
- Smoke alarms need to be replaced every 10 years. You can check the age of your smoke alarms by looking on the back. You will see a date stamped and the entire smoke alarm should be replaced 10 years from that date.

### **Step 3: Conclusion** (3–5 minutes)

We have covered a lot of information today. Here are four important messages to take home with you:

- Make sure your home has enough smoke alarms. You need one on every level, including the basement and outside each sleeping area. You also need to hear the beep where you sleep – install a smoke alarm wherever family members sleep.
- Test all your smoke alarms once a month by pushing the test button. Ask for help if you are not able to test your alarms.
- Make sure your smoke alarms are less than 10 years old. Look on the back of the alarm for the date of manufacture. Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.
- Interconnected smoke alarms provide the best protection. Consider installing interconnected alarms in your home.

Thank everyone for giving you their time to learn about smoke alarms.

Distribute smoke alarm tip sheets.

Share your contact information so attendees can get in touch with you if they have questions.