



# HALESITE F. D. SIREN



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## MOM, TWO CHILDREN DIE IN HOUSE FIRE

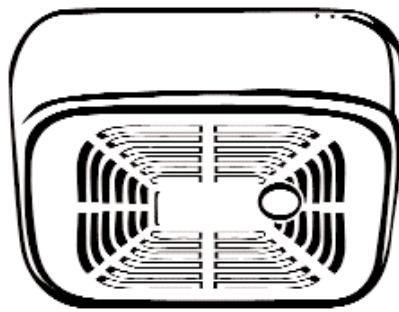
This actual, November, 2016, headline is tragic, but even more tragic because the local Fire Marshal found no working smoke alarms in the home. According to the National Fire Protection Association, the risk of dying in a home fire is cut in half in homes with working smoke alarms. NFPA reports that nearly 1,800 civilian residential fire deaths have occurred in the United States so far this year. This number shows significant improvement over the 2013 fire death total of 3,200; and smoke alarms are believed to be a major contributor to this progress.

Smoke alarms save lives and should be installed on every level of your home, including the basement. They should be placed high on a wall or on the ceiling inside (and ideally outside) each sleeping area and tested at least once per month. They should not be placed above windows because smoke might escape out the window before being detected by an alarm. When possible, smoke alarms should be interconnected; when one activates, all will activate.

Young children should know what an activated smoke alarm sounds like. You should also know what the different sounds mean. When the sound is loud and constant, the alarm has sensed smoke. You should leave and call the fire department. When an intermittent chirp is heard, there is an alarm malfunction, most often caused by a low battery.

### HOME FIRE FACTS

- Home fires peak in Dec. & Jan.
- Cooking is the primary cause
- Smoking is leading cause of fire deaths



## DON'T WAIT - CHECK THE DATE

How old are your smoke alarms? They do not last forever and with something as important as a smoke alarm, you want to make sure that it is operational. After 10 years, the alarm is not reliable. The date of manufacture, not the date of purchase, determines its age. The date of manufacture appears on the back of the alarm; if it is 10 years old or older, it needs to be changed. Smoke alarms are less expensive than they were just a few years ago; and some models have batteries that last for ten years. You still need to press the "Test" button every month, but changing the battery every year can now be unnecessary. Smoke alarms save lives, but only if the alarms are operational.



## IS YOUR HOUSE NUMBER VISIBLE?

Every year we ask residents to make sure their house numbers are visible from the street. Yet, every month we respond to calls for help from residents who do not have visible house numbers. Use 4" reflective numbers and place them where they are not hidden by foliage, open doors, or vehicles. Help us to help you!

## CLOSE YOUR DOOR

With today's furnishings containing plastics and synthetics, residence fires are much more toxic and spread much faster than ever before. Closing your bedroom door can slow the spread of a fire and provide a few minutes for you and family members to react to the sound of a smoke alarm. A closed door also helps keep out the toxic gasses - carbon monoxide, hydrogen cyanide, and phosgene - that are produced when modern home contents burn. The National Fire Protection Association reports that most fire deaths are caused by smoke inhalation, not by burns; and a closed door can help prevent these gasses from reaching you, while you are sleeping. When you exit a room or your home to escape a fire, close all doors. This will keep fresh oxygen from entering and reduce the oxygen that the fire needs to grow. Closing doors is one fire safety measure; but working smoke alarms can provide early warning of a smoke condition.



### SAVE THE DATES

#### December

- 2 - 4 Annual Christmas Tree Sale
- 4 Annual Holiday Party for children in the Fire District

#### January

- 6 Blood Drive

#### February

- 5 Pancake Breakfast

FOR FIRE OR MEDICAL  
EMERGENCY, DIAL

**427-7250**

FOR POLICE EMERGENCY  
DIAL **911**

## WHERE'S THE FIRE HYDRANT?



This is a photo from a snow storm in Halesite. There is a fire hydrant in this picture. Can you see it? If you can't see it, neither can the firefighters who may need it to extinguish a fire at your house.

Please do your part to keep hydrants visible. Please shovel or sweep snow away from hydrants and do not leave trash, debris, or cars in front of them.

We hope we will not need to use them; but you want them to be clearly visible, if we do.



## WINTER SAFETY TIP

After a significant snow storm, be sure to clear snow away from all home exits. If fire blocks your exit from your front door, you will need another way out.

## HEATING FIRE SAFETY

Furnace: Have it inspected annually.

Keep anything that can burn away from the furnace.

Fireplace: Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace to prevent sparks from jumping out.

Place ashes in a metal container with a lid outside at least three feet from your home.

Wood  
Stove:

Make sure stove is at least three feet from anything that can burn.

Have chimney inspected & cleaned annually.

Space  
Heater:

Use only heaters approved by a recognized testing lab.

Plug heaters directly into an outlet; never use an extension cord or power strip.

Kerosene  
Heater:

Use only heaters approved by a recognized testing lab.

Make sure heater has an automatic shut-off that shuts the heater off, if it tips over.

Refuel a *cooled* heater outside of your home.

## OIL BURNER PUFFBACK

It is a quiet November night and you are in the living room watching Monday night football. It is the first cold evening of the season and you just upped the thermostat a notch in an effort to take the chill off the house. Suddenly a "boom" is heard from the basement, something like a muffled car backfire. As you open the basement door, you are met by a cloud of black, oily-smelling smoke. An orange glow can be seen in the furnace area. What should you do?

A puffback is a misfiring in the furnace, typically the ignition of unburned oil that has accumulated at the bottom of the combustion chamber. It is not uncommon for a puffback to dislodge vent pipes, allowing soot to escape and travel throughout your house, settling on walls, drapes, furniture, and everything else from basement to attic.

When a puffback occurs:

- Shut off the oil burner. The shut-off switch is often at the top of the basement stairs.
- Close the door to the basement to reduce the chance of smoke spreading throughout the house.
- Exit the house and call the fire dept. via cell phone or neighbor's phone.
- Advise the arriving firefighters about access to the basement.



