



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Smoke alarms are reducing fire deaths in Alabama

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A recent study by the Alabama Department of Public Health shows that 58 lives have been saved to date through the Alabama Smoke Alarm Initiative. Residential fires peak during the months of December through February and installing and maintaining a working smoke alarm is a family's best defense for preventing deaths and injuries. Just a few examples are listed below:

In the Bullock community of Crenshaw County, a smoke alarm alerted a mother and her two children to an electrical fire in their home. While the home was a total loss, the family walked away unharmed.

In Brundidge, a family of 12 was celebrating the holidays when an electrical fire broke out. Due to a working smoke alarm, all 12 escaped injury.

A Notasulga family escaped without injuries when an electrical fire started in the bathroom. The alarm had been installed by the fire department one day before the fire started.

The common theme – all of the families had a smoke alarm provided through the Alabama Smoke Alarm Initiative.

The Alabama Smoke Alarm Initiative (ASAI), administered by the Injury Prevention Division of the Alabama Department of Public Health, was formed to help reduce the state's fire death and injury burden. ASAI promotes home fire safety by working with community fire departments in high-risk areas to provide in-home fire safety education and to install smoke alarms. High-risk areas are defined as those with poverty and fire fatality rates exceeding the state average.

In 2005, the State Fire Marshal's Office reported 85 deaths due to fire. This is equal to two deaths per 100,000 people placing Alabama among the top 10 states to suffer fire deaths and injuries.

The Injury Prevention Division will be expanding its efforts in 2007 beyond the communities identified through the ASAI thanks to a \$10,000 Safe Neighbors grant from State Farm® Insurance. These funds will be used to purchase smoke alarms and fire safety education materials for communities with large numbers of senior citizens, young children and impoverished families. The department will continue to work with local fire departments to disseminate these materials.

To make sure your family is protected, the ASAI and State Farm would like to remind you that smoke alarms should be installed within 10 feet of bedrooms and tested monthly. Alarm batteries should be replaced yearly unless the unit contains a long-life lithium battery. Also, create a fire escape plan and practice it monthly so your family will know what to do when the smoke alarm sounds.

Since 2001, the ASAI has worked with 20 fire departments throughout the state reaching more than 6,500 homes with fire safety messages and installing more than 4,800 smoke alarms. The ASAI is administered by the Injury Prevention Division of the Alabama Department of Public Health in conjunction with the Alabama State Fire Marshal's Office. Funding for the ASAI is provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To learn more about home fire safety, contact Amanda Martin at 800-252-1818 or visit the ADPH Web site at www.adph.org/injuryprevention.

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11/27/06

**News Conference
Smoke Alarm Safety
Monday, November 27, 2006, 10 a.m. CT**

Residential fires peak during the months of December through February. A working smoke alarm can reduce your chances of death and injury by over 50 percent. The Injury Prevention Division of the Alabama Department of Public Health has been providing in-home fire safety education and smoke alarm installation to high risk communities throughout Alabama since 2001. This program, the Alabama Smoke Alarm Initiative (ASAI), has documented 58 lives saved because of a working smoke alarm. Smoke alarms should be tested monthly.

Set-up time 9:50 -10:00 CT
News conference begins at 10:00 CT

Reporters may call 800-946-6307 to ask questions during the news conference. This number is to ask questions only, and is not an audio bridge.

Satellite Downlink Coordinates:

C BAND:

Satellite: Galaxy 16 (Formerly Gal 4); Transponder: 23
Orbital Position: 99 degrees West
Downlink Frequency: 4160 MHz; Polarity: Horizontal
Audio: 6.2-6.8

Ku BAND:

Satellite: SBS 6; Transponder: 9
Orbital Position: 74 degrees West
Downlink Frequency: 11921.0 MHz; Polarity: Horizontal
Audio: 6.2-6.8

If there are satellite technical questions, call 1-800-811-6047.

Webcast Information

News conference will also be available via live webcast.

RealPlayer is required to view the webcast.

Go to www.adph.org/alphtn

Click on the "view webcast" link

If there are webcast technical questions, call 334-206-5618.