



**Don't Wait** **CHECK** the date!



**REPLACE SMOKE ALARMS EVERY 10 YEARS**

**FIRE PREVENTION WEEK  
OCTOBER 9–15, 2016**

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## **Lesson Plan: Building a Stronger Community — The Importance of Working Smoke Alarms**

**Topic:** Promoting working smoke alarms in the community

**Audience:** Students in grades 1–5

**Materials:** sample smoke alarms, supplies for selected activity

**Time Frame:** 30–45 minutes plus time for the project

### **LESSON OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the lesson, the students will:

- ✓ describe actions adults can take to keep smoke alarms in working condition
- ✓ feel empowered to help build a stronger, safer community
- ✓ promote working smoke alarms to community members

### **Introduction**

Introduce yourself to the students, tell them about your connection to the community, and let them know you are happy to be with them.

**HOOK:** Let the students know you are there to talk about your community. Ask students to brainstorm some of the things that make their community great. List the students' ideas in a visible location.

Review the list and provide some positive comments about the students' ideas. Let them know you agree the community is wonderful but you want to talk about ways to make it even better. Share this idea with the group: "There are many wonderful things that happen around our community. Everyone in the community plays a role in protecting the people who live here and make it an even better place. Today we are going to talk about how working smoke alarms are important in our community and discuss some ways each one of you can get the message out about how to keep smoke alarms in working condition."

### **Body of the Lesson**

Review smoke alarm basics with the students. Use the following questions to guide your discussion. Use a smoke alarm to demonstrate the "Beep, Beep, Beep" sound.

- How do smoke alarms keep people safe?  
— *They warn us if smoke or fire is in the home.*
- What sound do smoke alarms make to warn us of smoke or fire?  
— *Beep, Beep, Beep, pause, Beep, Beep, Beep, pause. Some smoke alarms can also have a voice that tells us there is fire, along with the "Beep, Beep, Beep."*
- What should you do if you hear the smoke alarm sound?  
— *Stop what you are doing, get outside quickly, and wait at the outside meeting place for family members.*
- How often should adults make sure the smoke alarms at home are working?  
— *Once a month.*
- How can they test the alarm?  
— *Push the test button on the smoke alarm to make sure it is working. If it doesn't make the "Beep, Beep, Beep" sound, they should put a new battery in the smoke alarm.*



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- Some smoke alarms need a new battery every year. Others have a battery that lasts much longer. How can you find out which kind you have?
  - Ask an adult at home to look at the smoke alarm packaging, manufacturer's instructions, or the back of the smoke alarm to find out.
- Lots of things around the home have an expiration date, such as milk, sunscreen, and medicine. Do smoke alarms have expiration dates?
  - YES! Encourage adults at home to look at the back of the smoke alarm to find the date. They should replace each alarm when it is 10 years old.
  - Remind students of the 2016 Fire Prevention Week theme: *Don't Wait — Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years.*

AFTER THE REVIEW OF SMOKE ALARM BASICS, let students know that even though the steps to keep smoke alarms in good shape are easy, many people forget to do them. Tell them you need their help to get the word out about how working smoke alarms are important and to help the community to be safe and strong.

Use the board, chart paper, or projector in the next activity to capture students' ideas. Tell them you are going to explore 3 important ideas that will help you put together a message to encourage community members to have working smoke alarms. You may need to spend a little more time on supporting idea #2 to get students thinking about how each person has an impact on the larger community. Expect older students to have more complex ideas. The sample answers can be used to stimulate thoughts.

**Main Idea:** What can adults do to make sure home smoke alarms are working?

**Sample answers:**

- Check the date on the back of the smoke alarms.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.
- Test every smoke alarm once a month.
- Put a new battery in the alarm if it doesn't sound when the test button is pushed.
- Replace the battery once a year.

**Supporting Idea 1:** Why should adults make sure home smoke alarms are working?

**Sample answers:**

- So I feel safe in my home.
- To make sure everyone in my family has time to get out safely if there is a fire.
- If the smoke alarm tells about a fire faster, we can call the fire department faster.
- Because it is an easy way to keep families safe.
- If everyone did it, our town would be so much safer.

**Supporting Idea 2:** How will our community be better if everyone has working smoke alarms?

**Sample answers:**

- People will be happy if they know their neighbors are safe.
- Kids can focus better at school because they are less worried.
- The firefighters won't get hurt rescuing people if they can get outside quickly in a fire.
- More people will want to live and work here if they know it is a safe place.
- When people pay more attention to smoke alarms, it will remind them to do things to prevent home fires.



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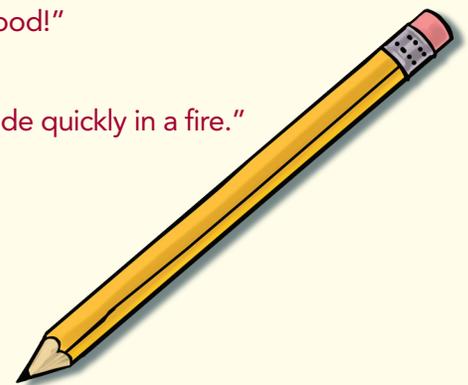
Once there are a variety of responses for each question, inform the **students that** the next step is to select one point from the main ideas along with supporting ideas to create a safety message promoting working smoke alarms throughout the community. Kids can work individually, in pairs, or in groups to craft the message. For example, a completed message might be:

*“Get new smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.  
A safe neighborhood is a happy neighborhood!”*

or

*“Test your smoke alarms every month!  
Families and firefighters are safer when everyone gets outside quickly in a fire.”*

*After the students have crafted the safety messages, give students time to complete the final product to help them share their safety messages with the community. Choose from one of the projects below or use your own creative idea.*



- Have students create, write, and mail postcards to family members and neighbors. They can illustrate the front with their safety message and include a short note about the importance of working smoking alarms on the back. This gives the students great practice in addressing letters, too.
- Create a class book with the safety messages created in the class. Write one sentence on each page, ask each student to illustrate a page, and then bind the pages together. Work with media specialists in the community to develop a fire safety display in the library to include the students' books.
- Work with a local grocery store to acquire a stack of paper bags. Have each student decorate a bag with their safety message. Return the bags to the store so customers will receive their groceries in a decorated sack.
- Provide each student with a strip of cardstock approximately 4 or 5 inches wide and 14 inches long. Fold the strip in half and then make a fold about 2 inches from each end so the paper stands up like a tent. Have students decorate both sides of the tent with the safety message and related images. Partner with a local restaurant owner to display the tents on tables when patrons are dining.
- Have students use sidewalk chalk to illustrate their safety messages on the school playground, their driveways at home, or the blacktop at a local park. Snap photos of their creations and use them on your community's social media sites.

### Conclusion

Briefly review the reasons why working smoke alarms in homes are important. Remind the students that they live in a great community but it can be even better and that they can help make it a safer place to live by sharing their smoke alarm safety messages with the adults in their lives. Remind them to tell adults about the 2016 Fire Prevention Week Theme: *Don't Wait — Check the Date! Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.*



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