



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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#### Smoke alarms save lives

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health reminds you that using smoke alarms and practicing fire escape plans can reduce injuries and loss of life. Most fire deaths occur during the late fall and winter months.

National Fire Protection Association research shows that from 2003-2006 an average of 378,600 fires were reported each year in the U.S., causing an annual average of 2,850 deaths, 13,090 fire injuries, and \$6.1 billion in property damage.

During this three-year period home fires accounted for 73 percent of all reported structure fires, 91 percent of structure fire deaths, 86 percent of the structure fire injuries, and 69 percent of the direct property loss. Sixty-three percent of reported home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

“Make sure that you have working smoke alarms on every level of your home and that you test them at least once a month,” advises Samille J. Jackson of the Injury Prevention Division. “Replace any alarm that is more than 10 years old. Finally, develop an escape plan for your home and practice it each month so that every member of your family can safely escape a fire.”

In Alabama alone 91 fire deaths were reported during 2007. Seventy percent of the fires reported were residential fires, and 57 percent of fire deaths occurred between November and March.

#### Remember

- Test smoke alarms each month.
- Replace batteries once a year or when a low-battery alarm chirps.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, outside each sleeping area and inside each bedroom.
- Ensure your family recognizes the sound of your smoke alarms by testing them monthly.
- Plan for evacuation by
  - Locating two ways out
  - Testing doors for heat
  - Crawling low under smoke
  - Stop, drop and roll
  - Designating a safe meeting place
  - Calling 911

For more information visit the Alabama Department of Public Health Web site at [www.adph.org/injury](http://www.adph.org/injury).

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