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For immediate release

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**STATE FIRE MARSHAL ENCOURAGES WEST VIRGINIANS
TO TAKE PART IN FIRE PREVENTION WEEK
OCTOBER 7-13, 2012**



Preventing fires in your home by making sure you take safety precautions when cooking, heating, smoking, using candles and other open-flame items, and maintaining appliances are the very best things you can do to protect your family from fire.

“While preventing home fires in our state is always our number one priority, it’s not always possible,” says State Fire Marshal Sterling Lewis, Jr. “West Virginians need to provide the best protection to keep their homes and families safe in the event of a fire. This can be achieved by developing an escape plan you practice regularly and equipping homes with life-saving technologies like home fire sprinklers and smoke alarms.”

What are some easy ways to plan ahead—in case you actually have a fire—to make certain you and your family can escape safely? More than 369,500 home fires were reported in the United States in 2010. According to the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), your best defense is a good offense.

That’s why the State Fire Marshal’s Office is teaming up with NFPA during the October 7-13, 2012, to let West Virginians know: “It’s Fire Prevention Week. Have 2 Ways Out!” This year’s campaign focuses on home escape plans, including knowing two ways out.

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According to NFPA, "It is important to have a home fire escape plan that prepares your family to think fast and get out quickly when the smoke alarm sounds. What if your first escape route is blocked by smoke or flames? That's why having two ways out is such a key part of your plan. This year's theme, "Have 2 Ways Out!", focuses on the importance of fire escape planning and practice."

The West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office and NFPA offer the following tips for protecting your home and family from fire:

- MAKE a home escape plan. Draw a map of your home showing all doors and windows. Discuss the plan with everyone in your home.
- Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible. Make sure all doors and windows leading outside open easily.
- Have an outside meeting place (like a tree, light pole or mailbox) a safe distance from the home where everyone should meet.
- Practice your home fire drill at night and during the day with everyone in your home, twice a year.
- Practice using different ways out.
- Teach children how to escape on their own in case you can't help them.
- Close doors behind you as you leave.
- Install smoke alarms inside each bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home (including the basement).
- Interconnect all smoke alarms in the home so when one sounds, they all sound.
- Test smoke alarms at least monthly and replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old or sooner if they do not respond when tested.
- If the smoke alarm sounds, get out and stay out. Never go back inside for people or pets.
- If you have to escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your way out.
- Call the fire department from **outside** your home.

To learn more about "Fire Prevention Week--Have 2 Ways Out!", visit NFPA's Web site at [www. firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org).

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