**The Fire Escape Plan That Can Save Your Family**

In the event of a fire, time is the biggest enemy, and every second counts. In less than 30 seconds, a small flame can turn into a major fire from a plethora of elements, such as electrical wiring, cooking grease, lightning strikes, wildfires, chemicals, candles and even toys left on lamps. With only seconds to respond, creating a family escape plan can mean the difference between safety and injury.

“It is important to remember that the crucial “things” in life are not the things in our house, but the people in our lives,” said Chief Tracey Mosley, North Carolina Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) program manager, “While many fires are preventable, plenty are not, and protecting those important to us is our highest priority.”

According to the Red Cross, the best way to prepare for a house fire is to ensure that all household members know key information, such as two ways to escape from every room of your home and a common family meeting spot outside of your home. While emergencies don’t happen daily, putting a solid plan in place in case of a fire will ensure that you and your loved ones know what to do if disaster strikes. Practice E.D.I.T.H. — Exit Drills in the Home — with your family.

The National Fire Protection Association offers this guide to make a proper home fire escape plan.

* Visit each room and identify two ways of escape.
* Check to ensure that all windows and doors open easily.
* Make sure your home has smoke alarms installed in every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area. Push the test button to make sure each alarm is working.
* Pick a common meeting place outside, preferably near the front of your home, where everyone agrees to reconnect after exiting the home.
* Make sure you house or building number can be seen from the street.
* Talk about your plan with everyone in your home, and practice your home fire escape drill!
* Remember, in the case of an emergency, call 9-1-1 first!

***Want to Do More to Help? Volunteer!***

The name of department is currently participating in the North Carolina Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) initiative, a program dedicated to increasing the number of volunteer firefighters throughout the state. More than 70 percent of all fire personnel in North Carolina are volunteers, and the majority of fire departments throughout the state are experiencing a volunteer shortage. Local fire departments need volunteers of all skill levels and abilities, people willing and able to respond to emergencies whenever called.

“The skills and experience gained as a volunteer firefighter are invaluable and have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of others,” says Chief Mosley, North Carolina VWS program manager. “Those who join their local fire departments are signing up for one of the most rewarding opportunities they’ll ever have.”

To volunteer at your local fire department, visit [www.volunteerfirenc.org](http://www.volunteerfirenc.org) or text “firefighter” to 88799 to be kept up to date about the program.

To discover ways that you or your organization can help the campaign to recruit volunteer firefighters, visit [www.weneedfirefighters.org](http://www.weneedfirefighters.org).