

# BIE SAFETY ADVISOR



**It is October and it is time to talk Fire Prevention. National Fire Prevention week is October 3-9, 2021.** This year's theme is, *Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety*

From beeps to chirps, this year's campaign works to better educate the public about the sounds smoke alarms make, what those sounds mean, and how to respond to them.

"Smoke alarms have played a leading role in reducing fire death rates over the past 40 years, but we still have more work to do in maximizing their effectiveness," said Lorraine Carli, NFPA vice president of Outreach and Advocacy.

According to the latest NFPA ["Smoke Alarms in the U.S."](#) report, working smoke alarms in the home reduce the risk of dying in a reported fire by more than half. However, almost three out of five home fire deaths occur in homes with no smoke alarms (41 percent) or smoke alarms that failed to operate (16 percent); missing or non-functional power sources, including missing or disconnected batteries, dead batteries, and disconnected hardwired alarms or other AC power issues, are the most common factors when smoke alarms fail to operate.

"People tend to remove smoke alarm batteries or dismantle alarms altogether when the alarm begins to chirp as a result of low batteries or the alarm is no longer working properly, or when experiencing nuisance alarms," said Carli. "These behaviors present serious risks to safety that can have tragic consequences in the event of a fire."

This year's Fire Prevention Week theme, "Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety," helps people better understand the reasons smoke alarms may sound, and provides the know-how to effectively address them. The campaign also addresses

special considerations for the deaf and hard of hearing, along with information about carbon monoxide alarms.

"Giving people the tools to properly respond to alarms sounding – whether it's an actual fire or simply time to change a battery – can make a life-saving difference," said Carli.

Key messages for "Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety" include:

- When a smoke alarm or carbon monoxide (CO) alarm sounds, respond immediately by exiting the home as quickly as possible.
- If your alarm begins to chirp, it may mean that the batteries are running low and need to be replaced. If the alarm continues to chirp after the batteries are replaced, or the alarm is more than 10 years old, it is time to replace the alarm.
- Test all smoke and CO alarms monthly. Press the test button to make sure the alarm is working.
- If there is someone in your household who is deaf or hard of hearing, install bed shaker and strobe light alarms that will alert that person to fire.
- Know the difference between the sound of a smoke alarm and a carbon monoxide alarm – three beeps for smoke alarms; four beeps for carbon monoxide alarms.

For more information about Fire Prevention Week, October 3-9, 2021, and this year's theme, "Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety," along with a wealth of resources to help promote the campaign locally, visit [fpw.org](http://fpw.org).



# Monthly Toolbox Talk

BIE Safety Advisor

## Emergency Action Plans

*Workplace emergencies can happen on any jobsite and may have the potential for severe injury to workers and even extreme property damages. Emergency Action Plans provide site-specific procedures so workers know what is expected and what to do in the event of an emergency.*

According to OSHA, the purpose of an Emergency Action Plan (or EAP for short) is to facilitate and organize employer and employee actions during workplace emergencies.

The goal with any EAP is to prevent employee injuries and structural damage to the facility during emergencies.

In the event of an emergency all personnel must know what to do or be aware of:

- Basic first aid
- How to report any emergency situation
- The procedure for emergency evacuation, including the type of evacuation and exit route assignments
- What does the alarm system look or sound like to alert workers of emergencies?
- Designated employee(s) that may be required to stay behind to continue critical plant operations
- How to account for all employees after evacuation
- Procedures for employees performing rescue or medical duties
- Name or job title of employees to contact for plan information

Examples of potential workplace emergencies that all staff must be prepared for include:

- Fires and Explosions
- Tornadoes and Earthquakes
- Heavy Equipment Failures
- Confined Space Rescues
- Hazardous Material Incidents
- Cave-in Rescues
- Fall Arrest Rescues
- Worker Injuries
- Struck-by/Caught-in Incidents
- Medical Emergencies

Site-specific emergency action plans (EAP) must be in place for every jobsite. The EAP should be in easy-to-read type and posted in multiple locations across the jobsite so every worker has the opportunity to review as needed. **Tip - A copy of the most current EAP should be kept in every company or site supervisor vehicle or project gang box.**

The basic EAP that is posted should include:

- Address and description of the site location
- Emergency response numbers for 911, fire department, police, emergency responders
- Name and address of nearest medical facilities
- Map to nearest medical facilities

Obviously the first instinct in any emergency is to call 911, but before any project starts, as the EAP is being developed, it is critical to verify that 911 is in effect in the area and to understand the emergency resources and facilities that are available for the specific jobsite.

