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MODELS IN FIRE PREVENTION

SYMPOSIUM 2012

Sound the Alarm

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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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Overview of *Sound the Alarm*

- Funded through a FP&S Grant from DHS
- Teams comprised of volunteer fire department members, Fire Corps and Building Officials
- Teams selected and trained
- Toolkits provided to each team
  - Smoke Alarms
  - Power screwdriver
  - Adhesive house numbers
  - Handouts and data forms
- Piloted in rural areas of three states: AL, PA, and TN

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Sound the Alarm Goals

- Unite Fire Safety Educators, Fire Corps and local Building/Code Officials in rural communities
- Install/replace smoke alarms and address numbers
- Survey homes for basic safety concerns
- Provide fire safety education and hazard correction information including an *Escape Plan* as necessary
- Collect and report home survey data
- Follow-up with safety reminders

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FORMATIVE EVALUATION

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Rural Communities Targeted

- Lack of fire department resources
- Obstacles in reaching households to disseminate information
- Lack of fire prevention education and awareness
- Smoke alarms present and operational in only 27% of rural residential fires
- The majority of rural fires (58%) occur in homes without smoke alarms
- 15% of rural fires occur in homes where smoke alarms are present but do not work
- 73% of rural residential structure fires occur in homes without operational smoke alarms

Source: Mitigation of the Rural Fire Problem in the U.S. – USFA/NFPA

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Why Include Other Home Safety Risks?

Anecdotal information suggests other safety hazards may be present; survey to validate and education to correct:

- ✓ Large number of smoke alarms older than 10 years
- ✓ Missing address numbers
- ✓ Absence of Carbon Monoxide alarms
- ✓ Unsafe porches or decks
- ✓ Pools not protected from accidental child drowning
- ✓ No family fire escape plan
- ✓ No emergency numbers programmed into phones
- ✓ No emergency supply kits

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PROCESS EVALUATION

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Effectiveness of *Sound the Alarm* Teams

Evaluated the following:

- ✓ Ability to recruit and assemble STA Teams
- ✓ Ability to create Teams with all desired participants
- ✓ Ability of Teams to meet their target objective (number of home visits/smoke alarm installs)
- ✓ Ability of Teams to accurately complete surveys
- ✓ Ability of Teams to submit timely and accurate data reports
- ✓ Satisfaction of Team members with the Program

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IMPACT EVALUATION

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Survey Results

- Fewer than 20 percent of the homes were adequately covered by functional smoke alarms
- 65% had smoke alarms that were over 10 years old (the useful life of a smoke alarm
- 52% did not have a home escape plan
- Only 83% of homes had their correct address properly displayed
- 45% of households lacked an emergency supply kit

Survey Results

- Only 22% of homes had a fire extinguisher on every level of the home
- 27% of homes needed emergency numbers programmed into phone or posted nearby
- 86% needed carbon monoxide detectors
- 21% of decks were not securely fastened to the structure; 17% of decks did not have proper railings
- 44% of pools or other bodies of water were not securely blocked from children

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OUTCOME EVALUATION

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Short-term Evaluation

- Measured improvement in proper placement of new, long-life battery smoke alarms
- Measured improvement in address numbers properly displayed for emergency responders
- Measured improvement in families with a fire escape plan
- Improved awareness of other home safety risks and information for correcting those risks

Long-term Evaluation

- Each team will have forms available to track any fire or CO incident that occurs in a home that received a home visit and assessment. The collected data will explain how the escape plan, overall assessment, and smoke and/or CO alarms played a role in the outcome of the incident.
- STA will track fire death and injury rates of the communities targeted for this program and match them against comparable data gathered at the start of the program, which was initially used to determine the communities with the greatest need.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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Critical factors for success

- Competent Program Manager
- Coordination with:
  - ✓ State Fire Marshal Office
  - ✓ Local Fire Chief
  - ✓ Local Head of Government
- Strong initial support of *Sound the Alarm* Teams:
  - ✓ Training
  - ✓ Media kits
  - ✓ Smoke alarm installation tool-kits
  - ✓ Simplicity in record keeping and data collection.

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RESOURCES

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Resources Available

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www.soundthealarmtoday.org

- ✓ Advertise (Media PSAs)
- ✓ Obtain homeowner consent
- ✓ Safely and Correctly install smoke alarms (First Alert video available)
- ✓ Conduct home safety assessments
- ✓ Educational information to leave with the homeowners.

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