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Fire Prevention Week, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

We consider fire an essential part of our daily lives, because with it we cook our food, heat our homes, and generate the energy that fuels businesses and industries across our country. But uncontrolled, fire becomes an enemy that threatens our homes, friends, and families.

Fire exacts a heavy price in the United States, disproportionately striking young people and senior citizens. Fire is deadliest in the home, where it can strike without warning, late at night, when we are least prepared to defend ourselves. Each year, hundreds of thousands of fires in the home cause thousands of civilian deaths and injuries, and billions in direct property damage.

Human error is largely responsible for the tragedy of fire in the home—and human intervention can do much to stop that tragedy. Each of us has the ability to prevent needless suffering from the destructive power of fire.

This fall, Fire Prevention Week will be an opportunity for Americans to show their best, as they help one another learn and practice fire safety steps. The tools we need to protect our homes and our loved ones from fire are simple. This year, the National Fire Prevention Week theme, "A Sound You Can Live With—Test Your Smoke Detector!", emphasizes easy steps we can take to give us valuable time to escape a home fire.

During Fire Prevention Week, all Americans should test their home smoke detectors, replace the batteries if needed, and learn the simple maintenance practices that will keep a smoke detector ready to protect the home. Replacing batteries and keeping a smoke detector dust- and dirt-free are a small investment of time that can make possible the precious minutes members of a household need to reach safety. Families across America should also use Fire Prevention Week as a time to practice a home escape plan. We should likewise spend time checking our homes for fire dangers—improperly stored flammable liquids; electrical problems; creosote buildup in chimneys; lack of spacing around home heating equipment such as woodstoves, or flammable materials too close to portable heaters; and other hazards.

Every small measure we as individuals take to prevent fire increases the level of fire safety throughout our country. Many organizations dedicated to fire safety across the United States will sponsor activities during Fire Prevention Week; they deserve our cooperation and gratitude. These organizations include the National Fire Protection Association, the International Association of Fire Fighters, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Volunteer Fire Council, the International Society of Fire Service Instructors, the Fire Marshals Association of North America, and all the organizations that belong to the Joint Council of National Fire Service Organizations.

We should honor the dedicated men and women of these organizations, especially the thousands of fire fighters throughout the United States. We pay special honor to the selfless fire fighters who have made the ultimate sacrifice, losing their lives in the line of duty so that others might live.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the week of October 9 through October 15, 1988, as Fire Prevention Week, and I call upon the people of the United States to plan and actively participate in fire prevention activities during this week and throughout the year.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirteenth.

Ronald Reagan