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News Release
NEWS RELEASE

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Red Cross and Town of Westerly offer free smoke alarm installations April 21 as part of National Giving Day

WESTERLY, RI (April 7, 2016) – The Rhode Island American Red Cross, the Town of Westerly and community partners are joining together to offer free smoke alarms and installations to Westerly residents on Thursday, April 21. In addition, the Red Cross is holding its 2016 Giving Day on April 21 to rally the Rhode Island public to support the Red Cross as it meets its critical and lifesaving mission of helping families who have been affected by disaster or emergencies.

The smoke alarm installations are part of the Red Cross Home Fire Preparedness Campaign to reduce the number of deaths and injuries due to fire. Westerly partners include the Town of Westerly, Westerly Fire Department, Dunn's Corner Fire District, Misquamicut Fire District, Watch Hill Fire District, Westerly Ambulance and the Westerly Community Emergency Response Team.

Residents can schedule a visit by visiting <http://www.redcross.org/local/ri/schedule-a-visit> or by calling 877-287-3327 and choosing option 1 on the menu to request a smoke alarm installation. The Town of Westerly is also reaching out to residents to make them aware of the program.

Red Cross volunteers will be joined by volunteers from the town of Westerly to visit homes between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on April 21. Teams making visits will share fire safety and preparedness information and install smoke alarms in homes as requested. Volunteers will help families understand the importance of fire safety and help them develop personalized family escape plans to use in the event a fire breaks out in their home.

"The Town of Westerly is pleased to partner with the Red Cross to provide free smoke alarms to Town residents," said Derrick M. Kennedy, Town Manager. "The importance of working smoke alarms cannot be underestimated. The Town consistently looks for partnerships and opportunities to keep our residents safe."

"We are excited to offer these visits," said Elizabeth McDonald, Senior Director of Emergency Services with the Rhode Island Chapter. "They are easy to schedule, take only about 20 minutes and might prevent a tragedy."

McDonald said the presence of working smoke alarms in a home cuts in half the risk of someone dying from a home fire. "Smoke alarms save lives and we know that they add valuable escape time when they are installed and working properly," she added.

The American Red Cross Home Fire Preparedness Campaign brings Red Cross workers together with local fire departments and community partners to share fire safety tools and tips in

home visits with residents. Those visits include educating people about fire safety through one-on-one conversations and free installation of smoke alarms.

“We want people to take advantage of this program and we hope to have lots of registrations for installation of these free smoke alarms on April 21.”

Simple Steps to Save Lives

McDonald said early detection of fire and an escape plan are vital to safely surviving a home fire.

“Fire experts agree that you could have as little as two minutes to escape a home in the event of a fire. Smoke alarms can notify you of fire and an escape plan can reduce panic and time spent getting out of your home.” McDonald added that canvassers will share information and tools to help families develop a personalized escape plan.

The Red Cross is asking everyone to take two simple steps that can save lives: check their existing smoke alarms and practice fire drills at home.

There are several things families and individuals can do to increase their chances of surviving a fire:

- If you do not have smoke alarms in your home, install them. At a minimum, put one on every level of the home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas. Local building codes vary and there may be additional requirements in your community.
- If you do have smoke alarms, test them today. If they don't work, replace them.
- Make sure that everyone in the family knows how to get out of every room and how to get out of the home in less than two minutes.
- Practice that plan. What's the household's escape time?

The Red Cross responds to nearly 70,000 disasters each year in the United States and the vast majority of those are home fires. In Rhode Island, the Red Cross responded to nearly 300 disasters last year. Nearly all of those responses were residential fires. You can help people affected by disasters like home fires and countless other crises by [making a donation](#) to support American Red Cross Disaster Relief. Your gift enables the Red Cross to prepare for, respond to and help people recover from disasters big and small. Visit redcross.org, call 1-800-RED CROSS or text REDCROSS to 90999 to make a \$10 donation.

About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org/ct or visit us on Twitter at [@RIRedCross](https://twitter.com/RIRedCross).

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