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## **HOAs Heads Up - Pass the Word:**

### **Red Cross program takes aim at fire safety**

By Chris Lawrence in News | April 25, 2018

**CHARLESTON, W.Va.** — The American Red Cross is typically there when fire leaves a family homeless. This week the organization has attempted to be there even before the fire starts in hopes of averting tragedy.

Red Cross officials are working to insure smoke alarms are installed in homes across the state with the “Sound the Alarm” program. A kick-off event was held Wednesday in Charleston.

**“The installation of smoke alarms free of charge to anybody who calls and requests an appointment,” said Erica Mani, Regional Chief Executive Officer for the Central West Virginia Chapter of the Red Cross. “We also go door to door and ask if people need free smoke alarms installed in their homes.’**

The program has been ongoing for several years and the Red Cross has placed smoke alarms in homes in all 55 West Virginia counties. Mani said they are attempting to concentrate on those areas where the statistics show the highest incidents of fires and fire fatalities. Sadly, she added, that’s almost all of West Virginia.

“We’re I believe at this point the top state for death and injury in home fires,” Mani said.

It’s a similar message to that of the West Virginia Fire Marshal’s office. In fact the two often partner on this effort to install smoke detectors, but also offer up education to homeowners.

“We’re offering up education to families and help with the creation of escape plans,” Mani added. “We also want to make sure people understand when that alarm sounds, they only have about two minutes to get out of the house.”

Those served by the program, according to Mani, seem to be either in a financial bind which made installation of a smoke detector difficult to afford or they were oblivious and never gave fire protection much thought. Some homes have smoke alarms, but just need to have the batteries changed out.

Anyone wanting a smoke alarm installation or check of their existing one can call 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit them online at [soundthealarm.org](http://soundthealarm.org).

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

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