



# Minnesota Fire Safety Educator

**A Resource for Fire Safety Educators  
From the Minnesota State Fire Marshal Division**

**April 2016  
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**MnDPS SFM - State  
Fire Marshal**

## *“Reaching the Hard to Reach”*

In case you missed the webinar titled “Reaching the Hard to Reach,” the [recorded copy is now available](#).

Across the country and here in Minnesota, we have seen the number of fire deaths decline through many efforts, including the fire prevention programs offered at our fire departments. One area of fire prevention that can be especially challenging is to reach some of the audiences in the most need. Often it is more challenging to reach those audiences that have limited education and finances and are also often high-risk populations. The webinar explores the perceptions many have about these audiences and how to change behavior through effective messages.

A well-crafted message misses the mark if it does not reach its intended audience due to packaging and placement of messaging. This webinar, presented by Andrea G. Vastis, MPH, explains how to reach audiences effectively and reveals the key components in reaching the hard to reach to encourage behavior change.

Andrea G. Vastis has over 20 years of health education and public health experience, having worked in employee wellness, as a public health promotion specialist for the Rhode Island Department of Health, and in teaching and preparing undergraduate community health educators at Rhode Island College. Andrea has spent her career promoting messages that encourage public safety, disease prevention and health promotion to audiences who are not easily accessible. She has drawn on her career’s work to develop this dynamic presentation.

I recently saw Andrea speak at the Remembering When Conference, and she truly is a dynamic speaker with great insight in reaching a wide variety of audiences.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Teresa Neal at [Teresa.Neal@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:Teresa.Neal@fema.dhs.gov)



# Materials generator

Vision 20/20 has recently come out with a materials generator tool that allows you to generate customized door hangers, fliers and activity guides that use proven fire safety messages with your own department logo. You will also be able to add your own photos to customize the materials even more for your own community.

The messages used in the materials generator were developed by a team of fire safety and communications experts, then tested with different audiences. Through this testing process, they found that images and messages that depicted safety of family and loved ones made the most impact on the audience. You will find that the images are not the standard picture of a hand testing a smoke alarm but families together.

There is a PowerPoint presentation you can watch to learn more about the materials generator or a webinar put on by Vision 20/20. These are great options to become familiar with the tool, but don't be intimidated; the tool is very user friendly, and in minutes you will have your own materials created.

You will find the materials generator on the [Vision 20/20 website](#) and linked to from the [State Fire Marshal website](#).



## Minnesota State Fair

Planning is already underway for the 18<sup>th</sup> annual Governor's Fire Prevention Day at the Minnesota State Fair. Be sure to mark your calendar for the world's largest fire prevention event, Governor's Fire Prevention Day. The date for 2016 is Friday, August 26. Once again you will see presentations of fire prevention, Fire Explorers competing in a variety of competitions and fire prevention professionals sharing knowledge and safety advice. Of course, volunteers are always needed in a variety of capacities to make this event possible. For more information, keep an eye on the [Governor's Fire Prevention Day website](#).

<http://governorsfirepreventionday.org/>

# ***See It Before You Sign It campaign***

Off-campus housing is where the risk lies. Between 2000 and 2005, 94 percent of college-related fire deaths happened in off-campus housing, and since 2005, every single one has been off-campus.

Students are getting ready for next fall and are signing leases on apartments or houses that, often, their parents don't see until they are moving them in August or September. And these may very well be units that the parents are paying for or co-signing a lease on, sight unseen.

See It Before You Sign It is a campaign to raise awareness among parents about the importance of fire safety and to encourage them to see the apartment, either in-person or virtually, before a lease is signed. Students don't necessarily know what look for, and this will be a chance for parents to teach their children a life skill about what makes a place safe to live.

See It Before You Sign It will kick off on April 4 with a series of messages and resources for parents to use. Campus Firewatch, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the National Fire Protection Association and the United States Fire Administration are working together on this campaign to spread the message, and we can use your help. Please share this heads up with others in your community, such as your administration, schools, fire department and community leaders. Starting in April, you could plan on holding a press conference, putting out a press release or sharing the social media messages we will be putting out with the hashtag #offcampusfire. Share the resources from each of these organizations with parents so they know what to look for.

Who is the audience? Parents

What is the campaign? See It Before You Sign It off-campus fire safety

When is it launching? Monday, April 4

Where can you find it? [Campus Firewatch](#), [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#), [National Fire Protection Association](#) and [the United States Fire Administration](#)

Why are we doing this? To stop off-campus fire deaths

Thank you for your help!

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## ***Sparky on the go***

The Minnesota SFMD has a lending library for departments to use. Items in the lending library include videos from Sparky videos to fire extinguisher training, books from fire prevention manuals to children's books, a spinning wheel and Sparky costume. All of these items are there for departments to use for free (although you may need to pay some shipping to get the items back to SFMD). The entire list of items can be found on the [SFMD website](#).

Recently, Sparky has made appearances in Cloquet and Plummer for events. If you would like Sparky to make an appearance at your event, just send me an email at [amanda.swenson@state.mn.us](mailto:amanda.swenson@state.mn.us). Be sure to allow ample time for Sparky to travel!



Sparky with Plummer Fire Department

# ***Red Cross smoke alarm install***

We need you!

Nine Minnesotans have died in home fires since January 1, and if nothing changes, data shows nine more will die by the end of June.

We can't wait another minute to prevent tragedies like this. The Red Cross has already saved at least 77 lives nationwide by installing smoke alarms and teaching fire safety. Last year, the Minnesota Region team installed over 1,000 alarms. This month our team is going BIG!

We need you (and everyone you know) to help us install over 2,000 alarms in April alone, shattering the divisional record for number of smoke alarms installed in a single month. This is a monumental effort, similar in scale to a large disaster response. We need all hands on deck to pull it off and make Minnesota proud!

Throughout the month of April, we have 16 canvassing and installation events across the region that need your help. No experience necessary. [Click here to see the opportunities and quickly sign up!](#)

Spread the word! Share this message or the sample posts below so your contacts, friends and communities can help too!

Sincerely,

Phil Hansen,  
Regional Chief Executive Officer

Megan Mrozek  
Regional Disaster Officer

## **Twitter**

You can help save lives this April during the #GreatMinnesotaSmokeAlarmInstall. <http://bit.ly/savelivesmn> #beahero @mnredcross

## **Facebook/LinkedIn**

Did you know nine Minnesotans have died because of home fires since January? You can help the Red Cross prevent tragedies like this in April during the #GreatMinnesotaSmokeAlarmInstall. The plan is to install more than 2,000 smoke alarms across Minnesota. Your help is needed to make it happen. Your friends and family can help too. All are welcome to join this lifesaving effort! <http://bit.ly/savelivesmn>

# ***Distracted Driving Awareness Month***

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Distracted driving is a leading cause of crashes in Minnesota and across the nation. [Minnesota Network of Employers for Traffic Safety](#) has resources available to help in your efforts to reduce distracted driving. On the website you will find materials for Distracted Driving Awareness Month as well as other resources related to distract driving, such as policies for workplace driving, Powerpoint presentations, fact sheets, email blasts, posters and flyers.

You will also find information on the [Minnesota State Patrol website](#), along with their [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter](#).

## ***Social media***

Are you looking for some posts for social media? The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has created social media posts for electrical safety, candles, heating, Fire Prevention Week smoke alarms and Wildfire Preparedness Day. In anticipation of Electrical Safety month, which is May, NFPA has also created [new tweets](#). There are more topics to come so keep an eye on the NFPA website for more social media tools.

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) also has a number of social media resources for fire departments to use in their fire prevention efforts. On the [USFA website](#) you will find social media images for smoke alarms, escape planning, carbon monoxide, children and much more.

Of course, you can also follow or like the SFMD on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) to share posts or get ideas to create your own!

## ***Children's product recalls***

Concerned about products designed for children and their safety? Safe Kids Worldwide makes it easy to keep track of recalls related to children's products. Safe Kids collects information from federal agencies such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission, Food and Drug Administration and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The website also has an option to sign up for recalls by email to stay up to date on products being recalled.

The list of recalls can be found on the [Safe Kids Worldwide website](#).

## ***NFPA update***

In March, NFPA released a report titled "Home Fires Involving Heating Equipment," which looks into the average of 56,000 structure fires per year that involve heating equipment. These home fires include one-and two-family homes, apartments, townhomes and other multi-family dwellings. The report looks at fires between 2009 and 2013 and their causes.

A free webinar titled "Hazard Assessment of Lithium Ion Battery Energy Storage Systems" will be offered on Tuesday, April 19 from 12:30 to 2:00 PM (EDT). The webinar is designed to assist AHJ, emergency responders, building owners and others with literature review of lithium ion battery energy storage systems and full-scale fire testing results.

Some new tip sheets have been posted on the [NFPA website](#), including a top sheet on hoarding and fire, barn fire safety checklist and others. They have been updated so that departments can customize them with department logo and contact information.

On March 18, 2016, Sparky, our beloved fire safety dog, turned 65! To celebrate this milestone birthday, Sparky has been traveling around the country visiting landmarks and spreading the message of fire safety. If you are interested in keeping up on Sparky's travels, check out the [NFPA Safety Source blog](#). And be sure to log onto the Safety Source blog to keep up on other news and information about fire prevention and safety.

## ***FP&S Grants***

The Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grants are part of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and support projects that enhance the safety of the public and firefighters from fire and related hazards. The primary goal is to reduce injury and prevent death among high-risk populations.

The application period is open between Monday, April 4 and Friday, May 6. The full details of the grant process can be found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) on the [FEMA website](#).

In order to reach high-risk populations, the grant has four project categories eligible for funding. Again this year, five percent of the scoring will be based on funding priorities. The funding priorities are listed under the application category.

- General Education/Awareness

- Comprehensive home fire safety campaign with door-to-door smoke alarm installation or sprinkler awareness

- Code Enforcement/Awareness

- Projects that focus on fire time or reinstatement of code adoption and code enforcement

- Fire and Arson Investigation

- Projects that aim to aggressively investigate every fire

- National/State/Regional Programs and Study

- Projects that focus on residential fire issues and/or firefighter safety projects or strategies designed to measurably change firefighter behavior and decision-making

Applicants can apply for up to three separate projects on one application. The period of performance is generally 12 months. Each applicant is limited to a \$1.5 million federal share. This year the funding available is a total of \$34 million.

A big change this year that may help fund smaller projects are micro grants. The micro grants must be \$25,000 or less. The other big change is that sustainability is no longer scored, so the evaluation criteria weights have changed.

## ***MN Fire Chiefs Public Education Group***

Mark your calendar for the next Chiefs Pub Ed Meeting!

Wednesday, May 11

10:00 am

Savage Fire Department

If you have questions, please contact the committee chair, John Babin, at [jbabin@ci.savage.mn.us](mailto:jbabin@ci.savage.mn.us)

The committee has also been working on a messaging document to help departments use consistent messaging about fire prevention around the state. The work on the document will continue on April 19 at 10:30 am at Plymouth Fire Department. An email reminder, along with the current version of the document, will be sent out soon.

## ***Paradigm Challenge***

The Paradigm Challenge continues but is quickly approaching the deadline to enter. It is an annual competition to inspire youth to help address social issues. This first challenge is aimed at reducing fire death and injury. It is aimed at youth ages 7 to 18, and entries are due May 1, 2016. The challenge accepts posters, videos, inventions, events, apps or anything that will help to save lives. Full details and information can be found on the [Paradigm Challenge website](#).