

## Fire Safety Week spotlights escape routes

It's National Fire Prevention Week, that time of year when a spotlight is shone on fire safety and devising escape routes to avoid being injured in a blaze.

And the Brownfield Volunteer Fire Department is banking on area citizens to follow some simple guidelines to stay safe.

From Oct. 7-13, fire departments across the country will participate in educational events aimed at teaching students about the dangers of fire, including what to do if flames spread to a person (stop, drop and roll) and how to identify escape routes to safely evacuate a burning building.

This year's theme is identifying two ways out of every room in your home.

Just as children have fire drills at school and learn how to respond, a home fire drill will give them the skills they will rely on in an emergency at home, officials say.

In 2010 alone, U.S. fire departments responded to 369,500 home structure fires. These fires caused 13,350 civilian injuries, 2,640 civilian deaths, and \$6.9 billion in direct damage.

One home structure was reported every 85 seconds that year. Fire is unpredictable and moves faster than most people realize, firefighters say.

Having a tried and true escape plan with two ways is essential to ensuring your family's safety should fire break out in your home.

National Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which began late Oct. 8 and ended early Oct. 10, killing more than 250 people and destroying thousands of structures.

The story of the fire's alleged culprit – Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicking over a lantern in a barn – has since been exposed as fiction.

But the conflagration lent rise to a new era of fire safety, even though an official cause was never identified.

The Chicago incident may be the best-known blaze during a fiery, two-day stretch in October 1871, but it wasn't the biggest.

That distinction goes to the Peshtigo Fire, the most devastating forest fire in American history, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

The fire started the same day as the Chicago conflagration, roaring through Northeast Wisconsin and killing more than 1,100 people in 16 communities.

The Chicago fire burned some 2,000 acres, while the Wisconsin fire claimed about 1.2 million acres.

Officials decided to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire by launching a public education campaign about the dangers of fire.

That campaign later morphed into Fire Prevention

Week, which has been officially observed in the United States since 1925 and is believed to be the longest-running public health and safety campaign on record, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

Fire Chief Dennis Rowe said any good escape plan must include working smoke alarms, at least two ways out of every room, a meeting place outside, and practicing your evacuation plan at least twice a year.

Here are some basic safety tips if your home catches fire:

1. Make a map of your home showing all windows and doors that can be used as escape routes.

2. Family members should walk through their home and identify at least two exit points in each room (usually doors and windows).

3. Make sure all exit points are easy to access and free of any clutter that could delay an evacuation.

4. Make sure any security bars on doors or windows

have quick-release devices so they can be used escape routes during a fire.

5. Establish a meeting place outside your home, such as a tree, a neighbor's home, or any other landmark that's a safe distance from the burning structure.

6. Make sure your house number can be clearly seen from the street.

7. Make sure to call 911 immediately after you evacuate.

8. Make sure you have working carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors/alarms throughout your home, including at least one device on each floor.

9. Make sure to practice your home escape drill at least twice a year.

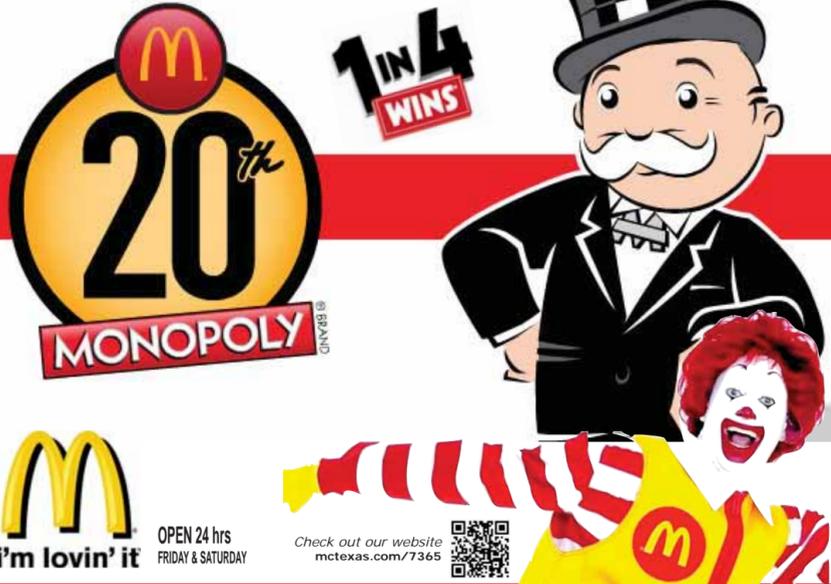
10. In case of smoke, get low. That means dropping to the floor and crawling on your belly if necessary until you're safely outside the burning structure.



**ELECT**  
  
**Albert Flores**  
 FOR Terry County Sheriff

Early Voting: Oct 22 thru Nov 2 Election Day: Tuesday, Nov 6  
 Pol Adv paid for by Albert Flores, 504 2nd, Meadow, TX 79345

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**Saturday, Oct. 13 9 AM - 6 PM Open to Public**  
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