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Safety for people with disabilities

Safety

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Safety in the workplace

Download NFPA's workplace safety for people with disabilities information sheet in [English](#) (PDF, 1 MB) or [Spanish](#) (PDF, 684 KB) for help in establishing workplace escape plans and to ensure that people with disabilities are included in safety planning.



Tips for people with disabilities

- **Smoke alarms with flashing lights:** People who are deaf or hard of hearing should use alarms with strobe (flashing) lights that have been tested by an independent testing laboratory. The alarms for sleeping areas with strobe lights are required to be of a special high intensity that can wake a sleeping person. Most major smoke alarm companies offer alarms with strobe lights. For information on availability and pricing, go to the manufacturers' Web sites. Manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of smoke alarms that meet U.L. standard 1971 for people who are deaf or hard of hearing include: [Ace Hardware Corporation](#), [BRK Electronics](#), [Gentex Corporation](#), [Kidde Fire Safety](#), and [Menards, Inc.](#)
- **Smoke alarms with 10- year batteries:** Alarms with a 10-year lithium batteries eliminate the problem of having to change batteries. The batteries are designed to last the life of an alarm. Ten-year battery alarms still need to be tested in accordance with manufacturers' instructions at least once a month.
- **Features that make testing the alarm easier:** Some alarms are equipped with large, easy to push test buttons. Alarms that can be tested by using a flashlight or television remote are particularly helpful for people with mobility disabilities, people who are blind or have low vision, or for older adults.
- **Avoiding nuisance alarms:** Alarms that go off because of burnt toast, steam, or other non-threatening sources can be a nuisance and can discourage people from using smoke alarms. Use alarms with a silencing feature that can be pressed to delay the alarm for a short period time. If the smoke does not clear in a certain amount of time, the alarm will sound again.
- **Installation and maintenance:** Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and outside each separate sleeping area. If you sleep with bedroom doors closed, have a qualified electrician install interconnected smoke alarms in each room so when one sounds, they all sound. Install a new battery in all conventional alarms at least once a year. Test your alarm at least once a month, following the manufacturer's instructions.
- **Escape:** Include everyone in your home and make a home escape plan, making provisions for anyone who has a disability. Practice your plan at least twice a year.

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NFPA's involvement



- In 1999, the NFPA's Center for High-Risk Outreach joined the North American Coalition for Fire and Life Safety Education to sponsor *Solutions 2000*, a symposium that brought together the fire safety and advocacy communities to examine fire safety challenges of young children, older adults, and people with disabilities. [Download a copy of the proceedings](#). (PDF, 1 MB)
- In 2000, a second symposium, *Beyond Solutions 2000*, was sponsored by the Center and funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop an action plan universal to the three targeted high-risk groups. This plan addressed the need for all fire safety and advocacy agencies to take collective responsibility in the areas of egress capability, early warning, and fire sprinkler protection. Several speakers with disabilities were concerned that not enough progress had been made and there were not enough programs addressing their safety needs. [Download a copy of the proceedings](#) (PDF, 630 KB)
- In 2002, the Center sponsored *Focus on Fire Safety Solutions for People with Disabilities* to act on recommendations of Beyond Solutions 2000. [Download the results of that meeting](#) (PDF, 58 KB).
- In 2003, the Center for High-Risk Outreach sponsored a meeting on *Criteria for Evaluating Public Education Brochures*. [Download the results of that meeting](#) (PDF, 48 KB).

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NFPA Mission: Reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education. [More about NFPA](#).

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