

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FIRE PREVENTION WEEK, OCTOBER 5-11
“WHEN FIRE STRIKES: GET OUT! STAY OUT!”**

VALLEJO - Having a working smoke detector properly installed in your home is only part of the battle against fire deaths.

“People need to understand how quickly fire can spread throughout their home, and they need to develop and practice a home escape plan,” says Vallejo's Fire Chief, Don Parker. “It is critical that while practicing your escape drill you emphasize getting out quickly and staying outside once you have evacuated.”

Because people are too often unprepared to evacuate a rapidly growing fire, having an escape plan and conducting home fire drills on a regular basis are critical elements to protect your family in the event of a fire. In a fire, you only have a few minutes to safely escape. Within seconds, a fire in your living room sofa could block your main escape route. Stairways and upstairs could fill with life threatening smoke within a couple of minutes, blocking other exit possibilities and only a couple of minutes more could have every room in your home completely filled with smoke or flame.

“The members of every household should develop a home fire escape plan that includes two ways out of every room and a safe meeting place outside so a head-count can be done,” Parker said. “The plan must also include specific details to evacuate anyone needing special care, such as infants, elderly, people who cannot walk without assistance. That way, you can immediately inform firefighters if someone is missing and possibly trapped inside the home. Once the plan is developed, all members of the household must practice the drill at least twice a year, emphasizing that once you are out of a burning building, you must stay out.”

Fire Prevention Week is observed each year in North America and several European countries in remembrance of the Great Chicago Fire of October 9, 1871, in which 17,430 structures were destroyed and 250 people lost their lives. Only through community awareness and public education can tragic incidents such as that be avoided.

During Fire Prevention Week, members of the Vallejo Fire Department will be stopping by schools to visit with students in Kindergarten through second grade. You are also invited to stop by your local fire station, meet the members of your fire department, and ask any fire safety questions you may have. Remember: Carefully design and practice your escape plan to help insure your family's safety.