

Awareness is Key

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You slowly take a step onto ash-blackened ground that was once your home— once your safe place. You walk a little further and see a fragment of a wall, a few charred beams, and a section of the roof, partly burned to ash. You look to your left and see your mother crying with your father's arms wrapped around her, comforting her. You and your family lost everything you had. All of your possessions, memories, and your home. What caused this tragedy?-- a house fire.

House fires can cause economic damage, injury, and sadly, death. On average, these tragedies cause over 2,600 deaths per year. House fires account for an astounding 92% of all civilian fire deaths. The leading causes of house fires are cooking (50% of all fires), heating equipment (12.5%), and electrical malfunction (13%).

Imagine cooking at home. You walk away for a moment while the stove is on. Suddenly, you are surrounded by flames, smoke, and ash. It takes only 30 seconds for a small flame to engulf the entire house into a roaring blaze. To prevent house fires, start simple: install smoke alarms in every room, implement carbon monoxide monitors on every floor, and change the batteries as needed. When we leave the room, we should extinguish the embers of candles or fireplaces. After doing the basics of fire protection, move into the more advanced defenses such as sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, or a flame retardant blanket.

Awareness is a major factor in the cause of home fires. People do not expect it to happen to them. Therefore, people need to be informed of how common house fires occur and how they can prevent them. One of the best ways to prevent fires is, of course, to do all the basic

preparation, but also educate people on how to handle fires. For example, we could have yearly school assemblies, where a fireman comes and talks on the subject.

House fires are extremely more common than one would expect. I had never realized this until one of my friends shared that his friend's house burned down recently and that they are struggling to find a place to live. Furthermore, as my mom and I were driving through town, we saw a house that was half burnt and charred. Awareness is one of the best ways to prevent fire. Educating fellow citizens about this tragic issue is of great importance in preventing potential fires.

Imagine walking away from the burnt land looking at the firefighters, your family, and the few things they managed to save, and thinking to yourself, "I wish I would have known this was going to happen. I could have done something about it." You take a breath and leave the place that was once your home, but is now a plot of land that is covered in ash and the few fragments of your house that are left. Evidently, awareness is the key to preventing such tragic scenarios. Being aware can not only save your home, but also those whom you dearly love.

Bibliography

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