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**EVERYDAY HERO CT REMINDS FAMILIES TO DEVELOP AND PRACTICE A HOME ESCAPE PLAN**  
***Volunteer Firefighters Observe Fire Prevention Week and Share Safety Information***

**October 6, 2017 | Cromwell, CT** – Consider this scenario: It’s 2 o’clock in the morning. You and your family are fast asleep when you awaken to the smoke alarm sounding and the smell of smoke. What do you do? If you and your family don’t have a plan in place, it could jeopardize your safety, or even prove deadly.

In a typical home fire, you may have as little as one to two minutes to escape safely from the time the smoke alarm sounds. That’s why home escape planning is so critical in a fire situation. It ensures that everyone in the household knows how to use that small window of time wisely.

“Developing and practicing a home escape plan is like building muscle memory,” says Chief Fred Dudek, Everyday Hero CT program manager. “That pre-planning is what everyone will draw upon to snap into action and escape as quickly as possible in the event of a fire. Not only can proper escape planning save lives, but it also allows firefighters to get right to work trying to save property as soon as they arrive on scene.”

This year’s Fire Prevention Week theme, “Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out!” works to better educate the public about the critical importance of developing a home escape plan and practicing it. Everyday Hero CT is proud to share this information from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the official sponsor of the Fire Prevention Week for more than 90 years, to reinforce those potentially life-saving messages. Fire Prevention Week is October 8-14, 2017.

“Home escape planning is one of the most basic but fundamental elements of home fire safety, and can truly make the difference between life and death in a fire situation,” said Lorraine Carli, NFPA’s vice president of Outreach and Advocacy.

In support of Fire Prevention Week, the Everyday Hero CT volunteer firefighter recruitment campaign encourages all Connecticut households to develop a plan together and practice it. A home escape plan includes working smoke alarms on every level of the home, in every bedroom, and near all sleeping areas. It also includes two ways out of every room, usually a door and a window, with a clear path to an outside meeting place (like a tree, light pole, or mailbox) that’s a safe distance from the home.

NFPA and Everyday Hero CT offer these additional tips and recommendations for developing and practicing a home escape plan:

- Draw a map of your home with all members of your household, marking two exits from each room and a path to the outside from each exit.
- Practice your home fire drill twice a year. Conduct one at night and one during the day with everyone in your home, and practice using different ways out.
- Teach children how to escape on their own in case you can’t help them.
- Make sure the number of your home is clearly marked and easy for the fire department to find.
- Close doors behind you as you leave — this may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
- Once you get outside, stay outside. Never go back inside a burning building.

To learn more about this year’s Fire Prevention Week campaign, “Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out” and home escape planning, visit [firepreventionweek.org](http://firepreventionweek.org).

### ***Volunteers Needed***

Eighty percent of all fire personnel in Connecticut are volunteers, and the majority of fire departments throughout the state are experiencing a volunteer shortage. Local fire departments need volunteers of all skill levels and abilities, people willing and able to respond to emergencies whenever called upon.

“The skills and experience gained as a volunteer firefighter are invaluable and have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of others,” says Chief Dudek. “Those who join their local fire departments sign up for one of the most rewarding opportunities they’ll ever have.”

***About Everyday Hero CT***

A partnership of the [Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association](#) (CFCA) and the [International Association of Fire Chiefs](#) (IAFC), the Everyday Hero CT campaign is a Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) initiative designed to address the shortage of volunteer firefighters in Connecticut. It is helping achieve a viable and sustainable volunteer firefighter workforce fire departments throughout the state. Everyday Hero CT is funded by a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant awarded to the CFCA by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop a model to enhance the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. For more information, visit [www.EverydayHeroCT.org](http://www.EverydayHeroCT.org).

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