

PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS OF WISCONSIN CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



fire safety

NEWSPAPER IN EDUCATION

Champions for safe communities, fire fighters, and burn survivors across Wisconsin.

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK
OCTOBER 4-10, 2026

Learn about battery safety

Develop a home fire escape plan

Enter the annual fire-safety poster contest



THOUSANDS OF
DOLLARS IN PRIZES
*available for
student poster
contest!*

29th
Annual
Edition

Open newspapers. Open minds.



Newspaper In Education

journal **sentinel**

This special section was prepared by DesignIQ for USA TODAY Network newspapers and other newspapers in Wisconsin. There was no editing or reporting from the newsroom involved.




Summer Camp for Burn Injured Youth

August 14-21, 2027

The Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin Charitable Foundation's Summer Camp for Burn Injured Youth, or "Burn Camp" for short, is a free, week-long, overnight summer camp experience for kids who have sustained a burn injury to grow their lifelong support system, continue to heal from the emotional trauma of their burns, and just be a kid. During the week, campers build their resilience through having fun outdoors, emphasizing the importance of friendship and the power of cherished memories in the healing journey. The participation and dedication of our volunteers makes this camp special for everyone who attends.

Our 33rd annual Burn Camp will be held from **August 14-21, 2027** at Lutherdale Bible Camp in Elkhorn, WI.

Lutherdale became Burn Camp's new home in 2026. Our first year at Lutherdale brought new surroundings and opportunities while preserving the friendships, traditions, and sense of belonging that have defined Burn Camp for more than three decades. Lutherdale's waterfront and outdoor spaces provide plenty of room for adventure. In addition to the many outdoor activities, including swimming, boating, fishing, and campfires, Visitor's Day brings area first responders, the community, and campers together for a fire truck parade and carnival.

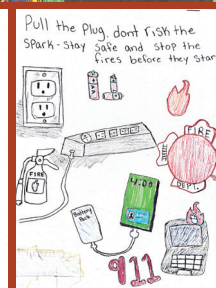
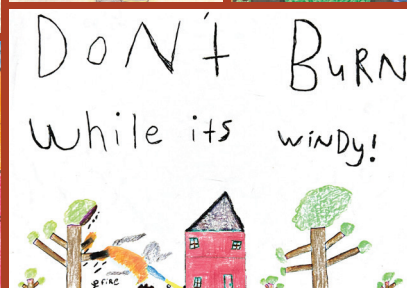
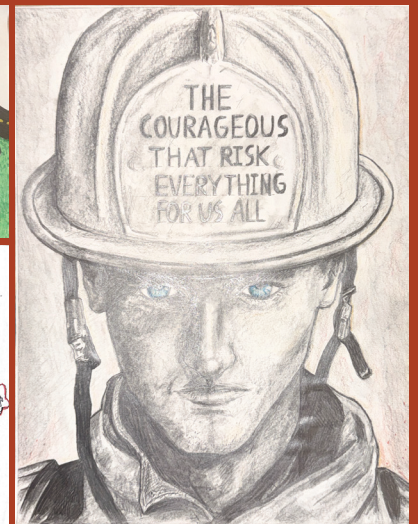
We need your help to spread the word about Burn Camp so that we can support more burn survivors who may not know about camp. To learn more about Burn Camp please visit us at www.pffwcf.org or call us at (608) 630-8440.



ATTENTION STUDENTS:

ENTER OUR POSTER CONTEST FOR A CHANCE TO WIN

**WINNERS
IN EACH GRADE
LEVEL WILL WIN
UP TO \$100!
FROM THE
FIRE
FIGHTERS
FOUNDATION**



Help us spread the word about fire safety through art! Students in Pre-K and Grades K-12 are encouraged to enter a poster submission into our fire-safety poster contest. Ideas for poster entries include promoting National Fire Prevention Week, emphasizing a home fire-safety safety tip, or communicating a general fire-safety message. Your poster may even be recognized in upcoming promotional materials, including in next year's Newspapers in Education program or the Charitable Foundation's website!

DEADLINE

- Postmarked by December 31, 2026
- Awards will be posted by Friday, January 29, 2027

JUDGING

All entries will be judged for message effectiveness and artistic creativity by a panel of Wisconsin fire-safety professionals.

RULES

- Posters must be submitted by a student in Pre-K or Grades K-12.
- Poster dimensions must be 8.5 inches x 11 inches or 11 inches x 17 inches.
- Any format of art is accepted including pencil, crayon, ink, paint, or watercolor. AI-generated artwork will not be considered.
- An entry form found on Page 15 must be attached to the poster. Judges will not be able to evaluate a student's poster without a completed entry form.
- All artwork must be submitted in hard-copy format. Electronic files will not be accepted.
- Only one entry per student.

PRIZES

1ST PLACE \$100
in each grade level

2ND PLACE \$50
in each grade level

3RD PLACE \$25
in each grade level

SEE PAGE 15 FOR ENTRY FORM

For more information visit www.pffwcf.org/firesafety

The Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin Charitable Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity.
We are champions for fire-safe communities, fire fighters, and burn survivors across Wisconsin.

TAKING Charge

Fire Prevention and Safety When Charging Electronics

By Lindsey M. McKee

Lithium-ion batteries are a big part of our lives. Placing a call. Surfing the internet. Making home repairs. These and many more everyday tasks are powered by lithium-ion batteries.

These batteries' increased use in everyday items has also increased the prevalence of fires, injuries, deaths, and property loss due to product mishandling. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) even focused Fire Prevention Week on lithium-ion batteries for two consecutive years to further raise awareness.

"It's the second year in a row that NFPA has focused on lithium-ion batteries," said Kenny Asselin, retired West Bend Fire Department fire prevention captain, Wisconsin State Fire Inspectors public education director, National Fire Sprinkler Association assistant state coordinator, and International Association of Fire Fighters fifth district burn coordinator.

"It's becoming such a big problem, because there's more lithium-ion batteries out there," he said. "You have lithium-ion batteries in your cellphone, your laptop, your tools. You've got lithium-ion batteries in everything."

The Power of Prevention

For a basic understanding of their makeup, lithium-ion batteries contain

multiple layers. Each plays a different role in storing or delivering energy to power electronics. The danger arises when those separate energy layers come into contact with each other due to damage. This raises their combustibility and fire risk when paired with unsafe human behavior.

"Lithium-ion batteries themselves are really, for the most part, fairly safe," Asselin said. "But any electronic device can cause a fire."

The first line of defense is at time of purchase, he continued. Ensure electronics and their batteries are UL Listed, meaning they met the required standards for safe operation. Use the manufacturer's provided chargers and accessories for maximum compatibility.

Lithium-ion batteries also require constant circulation to remain cool. Asselin shared his experience witnessing many overheating scenarios where people sleep with a charging device under their bedding and too close to the body.

"You want to place charging devices on a sturdy, flat, non-combustible surface. You definitely don't want to be charging a phone or tablet under your pillow," he said. "When it's fully charged, it's time to unplug."

Giving examples such as heated gloves or power tools, Asselin mentioned several instances where items overheat while unwatched.

"Batteries have a charge limit and can

be overcharged depending on the age of the battery," he said. "Electronic devices should only be charged when you're at home, awake and can keep an eye on them."

When the time comes to discard a device, lithium-ion batteries require a greater amount of care. Asselin said incorrect battery disposal has caused fires in garbage trucks and even dump sites when compressed during trash collection. He recommends checking BatteryNetwork.org to find approved locations for proper discarding.



You want to place charging devices on a sturdy, flat, non-combustible surface. You definitely don't want to be charging a phone or tablet under your pillow. When it's fully charged, it's time to unplug."

KENNY ASSELIN

In Case of Emergency

Even with the greatest awareness and care, accidents do happen. Being prepared for a fire emergency in tandem with having lithium-ion battery knowledge can save lives as well as property.

Standard fire safety guidelines apply

here, Asselin noted. Have and regularly practice a fire escape plan. Place multiple smoke alarms throughout homes, maintaining and testing them often. Keep doors closed when sleeping to prevent spreading if a fire breaks out. Invest in fire sprinkler systems or prioritize them when choosing rentals.

When it comes to lithium-ion batteries specifically, Asselin offers some targeted safety tips.

"If your electronic device is overheating, shut it down, take it outside and have it serviced," he said.

Another important safety measure is keeping in mind lithium-ion batteries' high flammability in the presence of any heat source.

"Once they're exposed to heat, that battery is going to be compromised and then it's going to go into thermal runaway," Asselin said. "It's going to accelerate the fire and keep it continuing to burn."

During instances where an individual is burned in a fire emergency, understand severity and initial treatment.

"If you have a burn injury, you want to run it under cold water for at least 10 minutes to cool the skin. Then any burn injuries need to be thoroughly dried and wrapped in a sterile dressing," Asselin said. "Second- and third-degree burn injuries need special treatment. So, if you have more than just sunburn-type burns, you definitely should seek medical attention."

Above all, Asselin encourages individuals to be prepared, even when they believe probability of a fire or injury is low.

"There's fires every day from lithium-ion batteries somewhere in the US," he said. "It can happen to you."



FACT SHEET



What is a lithium-ion battery?

Lithium-ion is the most popular rechargeable battery chemistry used today. It consists of single or multiple lithium-ion cells along with a protective circuit board.

Where can I find lithium-ion battery-powered devices?

Lithium-ion battery-powered devices can be found in the home and workplace in many common products such as — cell phones, laptops, electric power tools, wheelchairs, lawn mowers, e-bikes, scooters, and electric vehicles.

What are the risks associated with lithium-ion batteries?

Despite their many advantages, lithium-ion batteries have the potential to overheat, catch fire, and cause explosions. This most commonly occurs when the batteries are damaged, suffer electro-chemical abuse (e.g., from overcharging or completely draining the battery), are in

high- or low-temperature environments, or have an internal short-circuit. The heating from the internal short circuit can cause chemical reactions that lead to thermal runaway.

What is thermal runaway?

Thermal runaway is the primary driver of risks related to lithium-ion batteries. Thermal runaway is what happens when a fault causes self-heating in a battery cell. The process of self-heating generates incredible heat — more than 1,000° F — which decomposes the cell into smoke and flammable and toxic gases. When the heat from thermal runaway spreads to other cells, it can cause them to experience faults and the rest of the battery to go into thermal runaway.

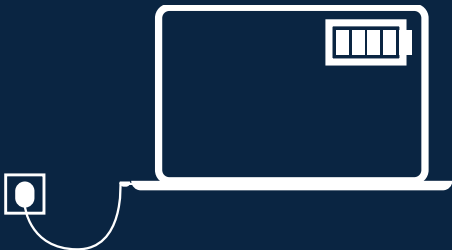
Thermal runaway often immediately ignites a fire, but if the ignition is not immediate, the buildup of flammable gases can cause an explosion that blows out windows and spreads fire throughout a structure (e.g., an apartment, house, or storefront).



Incidents involving lithium-ion batteries are on the rise.

Everyday use leads to everyday incidents.

Total incidents reported (1995-2023 YTD)



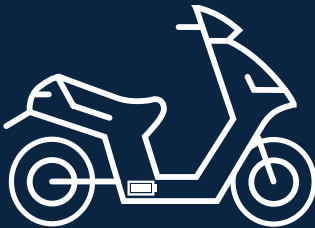
Consumer Products

1,159

Total Injuries

114

Total Fatalities



Micro-Mobility Devices
(<20 mph)

1,140

Total Injuries

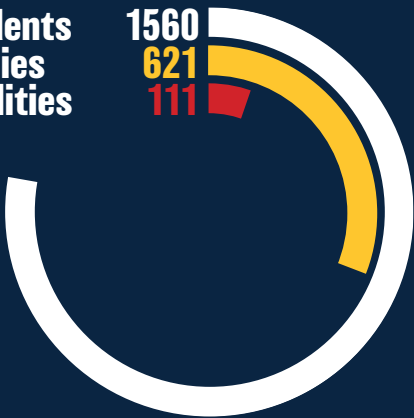
214

Total Fatalities

Incidents in 2023 (as of 10/19/2023)

■ Total Incidents
■ Total Injuries
■ Total Fatalities

1560
621
111



Research provided by UL Solutions: <https://www.ul.com/insights/lithium-ion-battery-incident-reporting>



New technologies present new risks.

Lithium-ion batteries can go into thermal runaway undetected and result in a fire. Not just any fire, a fire that emits flames, smoke and toxic gases that can cause an explosion and spread throughout a house, apartment, or storefront.

Fire moves fast.

From the first warning signs of smoke or hissing noises, you may have less than one minute to escape a fire.



Learn more at batteryfiresafety.org.

Take C.H.A.R.G.E. of Battery Safety.

The best way to be safe is to prevent a lithium-ion battery fire from starting. Take these important actions now.



Choose certified products.



Handle with care.



Always stay alert for warning signs.



Recycle devices and batteries properly.



Get out quickly if there's a fire.



Educate others on safe practices.

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DESIGN YOUR CHARGING SUPERHERO

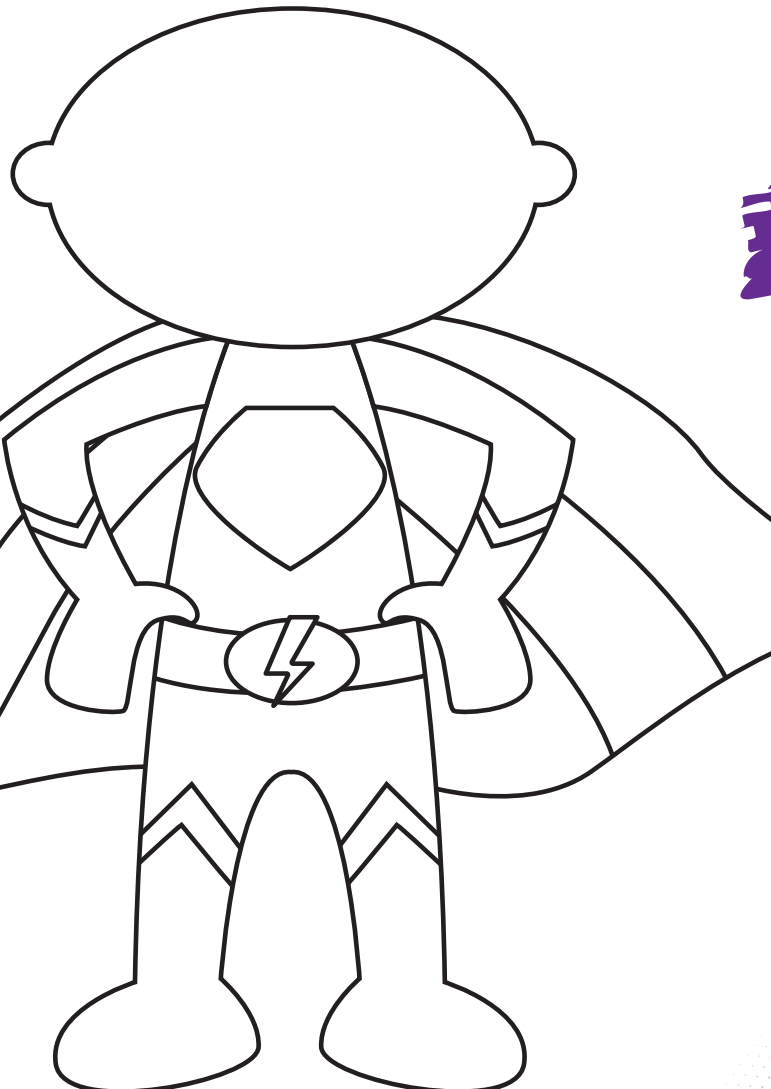
Create a hero who
uses safe charging
habits every day!

MY HERO NAME



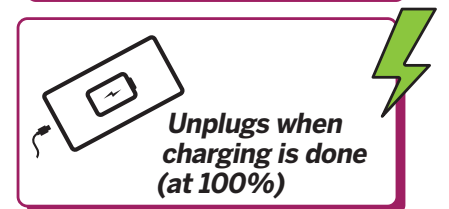
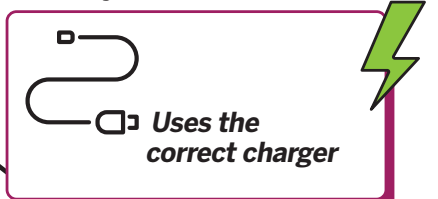
MY SUPERPOWER

Draw a symbol that shows your
safe charging superpower.



MY CHARGING
SUPERPOWERS

Color all the superpowers
your hero uses.



MY CHARGING SUPERHERO CATCHPHRASE

Sparky's Catchphrase:
"Be a hero every time you plug in!"



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sparky.org • sparkyschoolhouse.org



Safe Charging Is a SUPERPOWER

Charge into Fire Safety™



Family Power Check

Work together and see how strong your charging superpowers are.
Small actions. Big impact. Be a hero every time you plug in!

Circle one for each: Always Sometimes Never

1.	We use the correct charger for our device.		☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
2.	We charge all our devices on something hard.		☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
3.	We look for warning signs from our devices like heat or a smell.		☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
4.	We unplug when charging is done (at 100%).		☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
5.	We charge e-bikes, e-scooters, and large tools outside.		☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
6.	When on a plane, we charge our devices where we can see them in case there is a problem.		☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1

Total your **points** and enter your **score** below.

15–18 points
SUPERCHARGED HERO
You are doing a great job!

10–14 points
POWERING UP
Keep going. You are close.

6–9 points
LEVEL UP
Pick one habit to practice.

Family Power Mission

What is one charging habit your family will work on?

Superpower Pledge

We make safe choices every time we plug in.

Date _____



FIRE
PREVENTION
WEEK™

FPW.ORG



Safe charging means making smart choices every time you plug in.

Fire Prevention Tips

Parents and educators play a vital role in teaching children fire safety and reducing the risk of fires. To reinforce fire-safety messaging, we encourage you to lead a discussion about fire prevention for children using the following safety-tips:

General Home Fire Prevention Tips

- Never play with matches, lighters, or candles.
- Ensure matches and lighters are stored safely away from younger siblings.
- Install smoke alarms inside each bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on each level of the home.
- Ask an adult to test smoke alarms every month.
- Maintain a 3-foot clearance around portable space heaters and unplug them when not in use.
- Plug large appliances directly into the wall instead of power strips.
- Do not connect multiple extension cords or power strips together.

Electronics Safety

- Use the charger that comes with the device.
- Do not use damaged charging cords.
- Charge phones, tablets, and laptops on hard, flat surfaces – never on beds or blankets.
- When your device is fully charged, unplug it.

Kitchen Safety

- Never leave a hot stove or oven unattended while cooking.
- Keep towels, oven mitts, and food packaging at least 3 feet away from stove burners.
- Never put water on a grease fire. Slide a metal lid over the pan to smother flames.
- Do not put metal foil, containers, or utensils inside a microwave.
- Provide a fire extinguisher in the kitchen away from the stove.

In Case of Fire

- Identify two exit paths from every room in your home.
- Touch doors with the back of your hand before opening them to check for heat.
- Stay low to the ground and crawl under smoke where the air is cleaner.
- Memorize your full home address to report clearly to a 911 dispatcher.
- Choose a safe meeting place outside your home like a tree or mailbox.
- Never re-enter a burning building for any reason.



Only firefighters should re-enter burning buildings to rescue a pet!

Newspaper in Education
2026 Home Fire Safety Quiz

1. Where is the safest place to charge a phone or tablet?

 - A. Under a pillow
 - B. On a bed
 - C. On a hard surface away from things that can burn
 - D. On a couch under a blanket

2. Your rechargeable device becomes very hot, starts swelling, or makes an unusual noise. What should you do?

 - A. Stop using it and tell an adult
 - B. Keep using it until the battery runs out
 - C. Put it under a blanket
 - D. Charge it to see if the problem goes away
3. True or False: It is safe to charge a phone or tablet under your pillow while you sleep.

 - A. True
 - B. False

4. When making a home fire escape plan, how many ways out of each room should you know, if possible?

 - A. One
 - B. At least two
 - C. Three
 - D. Only the closest door

5. After escaping from a home fire, what should you do?

 - A. Go back inside for belongings
 - B. Hide somewhere near the house
 - C. Go to your outside meeting place and stay outside
 - D. Go back inside to look for a pet
6. Which THREE actions belong in a good home fire escape plan? Circle all three.

 - A. Know two ways out of each room, if possible
 - B. Choose an outside family meeting place
 - C. Practice the escape plan with everyone in the home
 - D. Stop to collect important belongings before leaving

7. Where should smoke alarms be installed in a home?

 - A. Only in the kitchen
 - B. Only near the front door
 - C. Only in bedrooms
 - D. Inside each bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level
8. How often should smoke alarms be tested?

 - A. At least once a month
 - B. Only when you smell smoke
 - C. Once every five years
 - D. Only after the power goes out

9. True or False: When a smoke alarm sounds because of a fire, you should get outside and stay outside.

 - A. True
 - B. False

10. What should you do with an old lithium-ion battery that needs to be discarded?

 - A. Put it in the regular trash
 - B. Put it in a regular household recycling bin
 - C. Take it to an appropriate battery recycling location with an adult
 - D. Keep it forever in a drawer





HOW TO MAKE A

HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN

1. Talk it through.

Meet with everyone who lives in your home to discuss what to do in case of a fire emergency. Write down your escape plan.

2. Draw a map of your home.

Include each level of your home, every room, window, door and all other exit points.

3. Determine two ways out of every room and what to do if you can't get out.

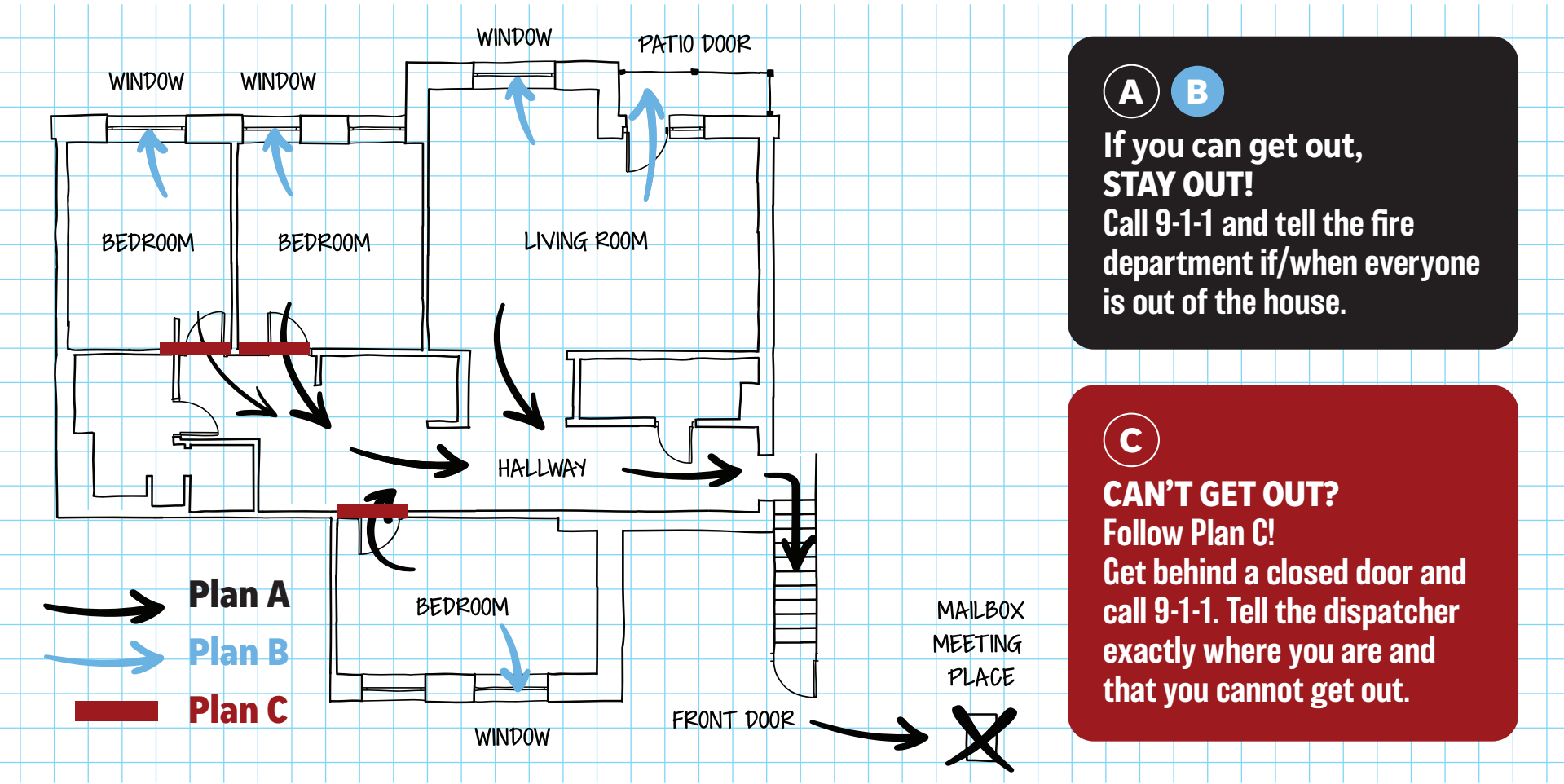
If one way is blocked or already filled with smoke and fire, having an alternate route will save time. If you can't exit safely, get behind a closed door and call 9-1-1.

4. Designate an outside meeting place.

It is important for everyone to have an agreed upon meeting place outside so that the fire department can confirm whether everyone is out or if someone may be inside.

5. Review and practice your escape plan.

Discuss and practice this plan with everyone living in the home including any overnight guests. Make sure everyone understands Plan A, B, & C.



Talk it through. Map it out. Practice your plan.

Use the graph paper provided on the next page or any blank sheet of paper to draw out your plan. The most important step is to make sure everyone in your home understands and is capable of following the plan.





MAKE YOUR OWN

HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN

STEPS:

- ☐ Draw a floor plan or map of your home showing all doors and windows.
- ☐ Find and mark two ways out of every room.
- ☐ Mark all smoke alarms in your home. Remember, you should have a smoke alarm in every bedroom, outside of every bedroom, and on each level of your home.
- ☐ Agree on a meeting place with your family and draw it outside your home.
- ☐ Don't forget to practice your fire escape plan at least twice a year.



I, _____, CERTIFY THAT I KNOW 2 WAYS TO GET OUT OF MY HOUSE IF THERE IS A FIRE.
CHAMPIONS FOR BURN SURVIVORS, FIRE FIGHTERS, AND SAFE COMMUNITIES.



LESSON PLAN

FIRE DRILLS:
SAFE AT HOME

Grade levels:
Upper Elementary/Middle School

Learning Objective:
Students will understand the importance of fire safety and develop strategies to ensure safety in each room of their home.

Materials: Fire Safety Newspaper, writing utensil

- Instructions:**
- Discuss fire safety basics with students as a class.
 - Explain the importance of smoke detectors and having a family escape plan.
 - Discuss the “Stop, Drop, and Roll” technique.
 - Highlight the importance of keeping flammable items away from heat sources.

Group Activity: Divide students into small groups. Instruct students to discuss fire safety ideas for each room, focusing on prevention and what to do if a fire occurs.

Conclusion: Bring the class back together and summarize the key fire safety tips discussed.

In your group, discuss fire safety ideas for each room. Write down your ideas in the chart below.

BEDROOM	BATHROOM	KITCHEN	LIVINGROOM



POSTER CONTEST

Entry Coupon

Only students in Pre-K or Grades K-12 are eligible to enter

Student's name _____ School phone _____

School _____ School address _____

Teacher's name _____

Teacher's email _____

Grade _____ City, State, Zip _____

Please mail entries to:
Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin Charitable Foundation
321 E. Main Street, Suite 200, Madison, WI 53703

HOME FIRE SAFETY QUIZ ANSWERS

1. C - On a hard surface away from things that can burn.

Charging devices should be kept away from pillows, bedding, couches, and other materials that can burn.

2. A - Stop using it and tell an adult.

Excessive heat, swelling or a change in shape, unusual odor, leaking, or odd noises can be warning signs of a lithium-ion battery problem.

3. B - False.

Do not charge a device under a pillow, on a bed, or on a couch, where heat can build up and nearby materials can burn.

4. B - At least two.

A home escape plan should identify two ways out of every room, if possible, in case one way is blocked.

5. C - Go to your outside meeting place and stay outside.

Once outside, stay outside. Never go back into a burning home for people,

pets, or belongings; tell firefighters if someone or a pet may still be inside.

6. A, B, and C.

A good escape plan includes knowing two ways out when possible, choosing an outside meeting place, and practicing the plan with everyone in the home.

7. D - Inside each bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level.

Smoke alarms should provide protection where people sleep and throughout every level of the home.

8. A - At least once a month.

Test smoke alarms using the test button at least once each month.

9. A - True.

When there is a fire, get outside, go to the meeting place, and stay outside.

10. C - Take it to an appropriate battery recycling location with an adult.

Lithium-ion batteries should not be placed in household trash or regular recycling bins because they can start fires.



Grease Fire

This photo illustrates what happens when water is poured on a grease fire.
NEVER PUT WATER ON A GREASE FIRE!
If it is safe to do so, an adult should slide a metal lid over the pan to
SMOTHER THE FLAMES.

NEWSPAPER IN EDUCATION SALUTES THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR SPONSORS!

This educational supplement is designed to provide the public with general information on fire safety. The PFFW Charitable Foundation, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, and sponsors of this section assume no liability for any actions taken by persons based on the information contained herein.

NIE Supervisor:
Mark Missurelli



Newspaper In Education

journal sentinel
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The Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin Charitable Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity. We are champions for burn survivors, fire fighters, and safe communities statewide. For 29 years, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel has been a partner on this award winning program that saves lives through fire-safety education. The fun and engaging content within these pages teaches students about fire and burn prevention, gas and electrical safety, and risk reduction in their homes. Please share with us how you are using our Fire Safety Newspapers in Education program at home, at your school, and in your community.



@pffwcf



/pffwcf

#PFFWCFBurnCamp

#PFFWCF

#FireSafeBurnFreeWI



This program is recommended by the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services to comply with s. 101.14(1)(c) Wis. Stats, regarding a form of a course of study in fire prevention for use in public schools.

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