

## **SOUND OFF WITH THE HOME FIRE SAFETY PATROL**

### **A fire safety program for students and families**

#### **Background**

Each year in America, almost 3,000 people die in home fires. At highest risk are the very young, the very old, and people with lower levels of income. Research shows that having working smoke alarms can cut the risk of dying in a fire almost in half. But we know that far too many people in our country lack this basic level of protection.

In 2018, the Center for National Prevention Initiatives at the Michigan Public Health Institute received a grant from the US Department of Homeland Security/FEMA to expand Sound Off with the Home Fire Safety Patrol, an important fire safety program for young children and their families. The goal is to work through local 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms to raise awareness of the importance of working smoke alarms and to install free smoke alarms in homes that lack this vital protection. Sound Off was field-tested through two previous DHS/FEMA grants and proven successful in 25 local communities, with an average student knowledge gain of 37% in 2015 and 42% in 2016.

In 2019, ten states across the U.S.\* are participating in this Sound Off grant project under the direction of a lead state fire agency that guides local Fire Departments to work in elementary schools where the children are increased risk of a home fire. In each community, the local Fire Department works with classroom teachers to deliver lifesaving lessons to students and their caregivers about the danger of smoke and how smoke alarms keep us safe—but only if they are working. Students and their families will count and test the alarms in their homes and report on how many work. Together, they will learn how to prevent fires and plan what they would do in the event of a fire in their home.

If participating students and their caregivers discover they do not have enough working smoke alarms, the local safety team will be available to make a home safety visit to install long-life smoke alarms and review fire safety plans with the family, **free of charge**. Visits will be scheduled at the request of the student's parent or caregiver.

#### **Target Audience**

Second- and third-graders and their families

#### **Program Objectives**

- To educate children and their families about smoke alarms including their sounds, their care and their importance
- To foster a community-wide approach to fire safety by forging partnerships among students, families, educators, fire personnel, and life safety educators
- To identify families that do not have enough working smoke alarms in their homes and connect them with local fire safety officials

#### **Program Components**

- A two-page teacher's guide
- Three reproducible student activity sheets
- A colorful wall poster for display in the classroom
- A digital whiteboard activity available at [ymiclassroom.com/sound-off](http://ymiclassroom.com/sound-off)
- A reply card for your feedback, or reply online at [ymiclassroom.com/sound-off](http://ymiclassroom.com/sound-off)

### **Alignment with Common Core Standards**

The activities in the teaching materials will align with Grade 2-3 Common Core Standards in Language Arts, including Reading Informational Text and Speaking and Listening, as well as Common Core Mathematics Standards in Measurement and Data, and Geometry. The activities will also align with National Health Education Standards (NHES) developed by the CDC. A detailed description of the alignment of each activity will be available at the Home Fire Safety microsite housed at [YMIclassroom.com](http://YMIclassroom.com).

### **How will the pilot test work?**

Ideally, each local team will work with one or two 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms as an initial test of the program and then expand to as many classrooms as possible during the grant period of performance (January – May 2019).

Each participating teacher will receive a teaching kit developed by national fire safety experts and curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired (YMI). It will include standards-based in-class as well as at-home fire safety activities.

The Fire Department-led teams will visit each participating classroom at the beginning of the program to talk with students about smoke alarms—what they do, what they sound like, why they are important. The teacher will give an assignment to the students to work with their parents and caregivers to count and test the alarms in their homes and to report back on their results. This information will be shared with the safety teams. It can be used to create a pie graph that shows how many smoke alarms worked and how many did not. The teams will visit again at the end of the program to talk about what they learned and congratulate them on the steps they took to be safer from a home fire.

Included in the homework assignment sheet, parents will be asked if they would like a home visit from the local safety team to install new alarms and review the family's safety plans. If the answer is yes, the safety team will work directly with the family to schedule and conduct the visit.

### **Thank You**

Thank you for considering this exciting opportunity to work with safety advocates in your community to help protect your students and their families from fire. Fire safety experts agree, the single most important step people can take is to install and maintain working smoke alarms. It is not always easy to know who is at risk because their smoke alarms are missing or not working. Your school can help us find families in need. Together, we can save lives.

\*States include: Colorado, Kansas, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.