



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

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

### **Background Information for Educators**

Each year in the United States, almost 3,000 people die in home fires. Research shows that having working smoke alarms can cut the risk of dying in a fire almost in half, but far too many people in our country lack this basic level of protection, especially the very young and very old, and people of low income.

Young Minds Inspired is pleased to share this resource with educators interested in receiving innovative curriculum ideas. *Sound Off with the Home Fire Safety Patrol* is a creative, fun fire safety program for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders aimed toward home fire safety, which you can conduct at any time, or during Fire Prevention Week in October.

See below for a summary of materials for your students and families. We encourage you to take a look through all these materials. You'll quickly see the value to children of knowing these lessons as well as the creativity and fun embodied in the lessons and materials.

### **Background**

In 2020 the National Center for Prevention Initiatives at the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI) received a two-year \$1.4 million FY20 Fire Prevention & Safety (FP&S) Grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security/FEMA. This grant, MPHI's 6th FP&S grant since 2014, expands development and delivery of the *Sound Off with the Home Fire Safety Patrol* program. *Sound Off* is a school- and community-based initiative led by local fire departments to reach low-income households with education and smoke alarms to keep them safe from home fires.<sup>1</sup> *Sound Off* is the only evaluated classroom-based program designed specifically to provide home safety visits along with effective classroom lessons to ensure that homes have working smoke alarms and knowledge of what to do when they chirp (signaling low battery power) or beep (warning of a home fire).

The goal is for local fire departments and other safety partners to work through local 2<sup>nd</sup> and 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 six previous DHS/FEMA grants and proven successful in hundreds of communities throughout the United States, average national student knowledge gain of 46.8%.

By 2022, 20 states had officially become part of the sound off network under the direction of a lead state fire agency that guides local fire departments to work in elementary schools where the children are at increased risk of a home fire. In each community, the local fire department works with classroom teachers to deliver life-saving lessons to students and their families about the

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<sup>1</sup> Research has shown that low-income homes are at higher risk of residential fires.

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.

If participating students and their families 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 while supplies last**. Visits will be scheduled at the request of the student's parent or caregiver. Together, children and caregivers will learn how to prevent fires and plan what they would do in the event of a fire in their home.

### **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 life-saving 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 firefighters and other safety partners

### **Program Components**

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

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

The activities in the teaching materials 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 also align with National Health Education Standards (NHES) developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A detailed description of the alignment of each activity is available at [ymiclassroom.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/so2018\\_standards.pdf](http://ymiclassroom.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/so2018_standards.pdf).

### **How does the *Sound Off* program work?**

To start, each local fire department team works with one or two 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms in the community, then expands to as many classrooms as possible during the grant period of performance. Each participating teacher receives a Teaching Kit developed by national fire safety experts and curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired. The Kit includes standards-based in-class and at-home fire safety activities.

The fire department team visits 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 gives an assignment to the students to work with their parents and caregivers to count and test the smoke alarms in their homes and to report back on their results. This information is shared with the fire department team and can be used in class to create a pie

graph that shows how many smoke alarms worked and how many did not. The fire department team visits again at the end of the program to talk about what the students learned and congratulate them on the steps they have taken to be safer from a home fire.

The smoke alarm testing homework sheet includes a question asking parents/caregivers if they would like a home visit from the local fire department to install new alarms free of charge (while supplies last) and review the family's safety plans. If the answer is yes, the fire department 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 your local fire department and other 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: Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Carolina, Northern California, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.