If you woke up to a fire in your home, how much time do you think you would have to get to safety? According to the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), one-third of Americans households estimate they thought they would have at least 6 minutes before a fire in their home would become life threatening. Unfortunately, the time available is often less.

The NFPA’s Fire Prevention Week is October 7-13, 2012. This year’s theme is “Have Two Ways Out” and focuses on the importance of fire escape planning and practice in the home.

In 2010, U.S. fire departments responded to 369,500 home structure fires. These fires caused 13,350 civilian injuries, 2,640 civilian deaths, and $6.9 billion in direct damage. One home structure was reported every 85 seconds in 2010. Fire is unpredictable and moves faster than most people realize. Having a tried and true escape plan with two ways is essential to ensuring your family’s safety should fire break out in your home.”

The NFPA recommends the following tips for planning your family’s escape:

- Make a map of your home. Mark a door and a window that can be used to get out of every room.
- Choose a meeting place outside in front of your home. This is where everyone can meet once they’ve escaped. Draw a picture of your outside meeting place on your escape plan.
- Write the emergency telephone number for the fire department on your escape plan.
- Have a grown-up sound the smoke alarm and practice your escape plan with everyone living in your home.
- Keep your escape plan on the refrigerator and remind grown-ups to have your family practice the plan twice a year or whenever anyone in your home celebrates a birthday.

To learn more about “Have Two Ways Out!”, including a family checklist, visit NFPA’s Web site at www.firepreventionweek.org. For questions about fire safety on campus, please contact Environmental Health and Safety at 974-5084, or visit our web-site at www.ehs.utk.edu.