
Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 7231 of October 1, 1999

The President

Fire Prevention Week, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Of the many disasters that affect our communities in a given year, fire is one that Americans can actually prevent; and, through early warning and appropriate response, we can minimize the havoc fire wreaks when it does occur. In 1998, U.S. fire departments responded to nearly 1.8 million fires, with three-quarters of them occurring in residences. Fire cost our Nation some \$8.6 billion in property loss last year, and it took a staggering human toll: more than 4,000 civilians died, and 91 firefighters lost their lives in the line of duty.

The place where Americans feel safest—at home—is the very place where we are at greatest risk from fire. Eighty percent of all U.S. fire deaths occur at home. If Americans knew more about fire prevention and better understood how to react quickly and sensibly when fire breaks out, we could greatly reduce such deaths.

Because knowledge of simple fire safety precautions is so vital to saving lives, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) launched a 3-year initiative to teach the importance of planning and practicing how to escape from fire. In partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, through its United States Fire Administration, and our Nation's fire services, NFPA has again selected, "Fire Drills: The Great Escape!" as the theme of this year's Fire Prevention Week.

Fire spreads quickly, making a fast response essential to survival. I urge every family to develop a home fire escape plan and to practice it at least twice a year. The elements of a good plan include installing working smoke alarms on every level of the home, establishing two ways out of each room, and establishing a meeting place outside the home.

Each of us can take these simple steps to plan and practice our own "great escape" from fire and significantly improve our chance of survival if fire occurs. By doing so, we can pay fitting tribute to the selfless service of our Nation's firefighters. The extraordinary personal sacrifice made by firefighters throughout America, and the dedication of all men and women who serve in our Nation's fire services, will be honored on Sunday, October 10, 1999, at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 3 through October 9, 1999, as Fire Prevention Week. I encourage the people of the United States to take an active role in fire prevention not only during this week, but also throughout the year. I also call upon every citizen to pay tribute to the members of our fire and emergency services who have lost their lives or been injured in service to their communities, and to those men and women who carry on their noble tradition.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and

of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William Clinton

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