



**Photo caption:** American Red Cross in Greater New York CEO Theresa A. Bischoff and FDNY Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano announced that free 9 volt batteries for household smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, along with important fire prevention and safety information, will be available for city residents at Red Cross locations in each borough. (Photo credit: FDNY)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**- FIRE PREVENTION WEEK -**

**AMERICAN RED CROSS IN GREATER NEW YORK  
AND THE FIRE DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK  
GENERATE AWARENESS ABOUT FIRE DANGER, PREVENTION, SAFETY**

**FDNY PROVIDES FREE BATTERIES FOR SMOKE ALARMS AND CARBON  
MONOXIDE DETECTORS ALONG WITH FIRE SAFETY INFORMATION  
AT RED CROSS LOCATIONS**

New York – October 5, 2007 – The American Red Cross in Greater New York (ARC/GNY) is supporting a community fire awareness campaign initiated by the Fire Department of New York that will help more residents become aware of the dangers associated with residential fires and ensure that more homes and apartments have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. During Fire Prevention Week (October 7-13), the FDNY will begin providing, at ARC/GNY New York City locations, free nine volt batteries that residents should use to replace old batteries in their smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Literature in English and Spanish also will be

available to provide tips and information about fire prevention and how to safely exit a home during a fire.

Every year in the U.S., fire kills more people than all natural disasters combined. On average, fire kills more than 3,900 people (850 children) and injures more than 20,000. Also alarming is that more than 75 percent of residences don't have a fire escape plan.

The free batteries and information are available to anyone who visits the following Red Cross locations during regular weekday business hours or during select times on weekends:

- Manhattan: The Red Cross Store at 520 West 49<sup>th</sup> Street, between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenues
- Staten Island: 1424 Richmond Avenue
- Brooklyn: 100 Pineapple Walk
- Queens: 138-02 Queens Boulevard in Briarwood (beginning in December)
- The Bronx: 2082 White Plains Road

To find directions and public transportation information for these locations, visit [www.nyredcross.org](http://www.nyredcross.org) and click on the borough name on the home page, or call 1-877-REDCROSS (1-877-733-2767).

The Red Cross urges every household to “Be Red Cross Ready” for fires and any kind of emergency, and to follow three easy steps:

**Get a Kit:** Have emergency supplies to shelter at home and a “go bag” filled with important items and papers to take with you should you evacuate. Maintain at least a three-day supply of food and water for every member of the household, including pets. Check supplies every six months and replace the items that have expired.

**Make a Plan:** Having a communications and evacuation plan is the best possible response to a disaster. During an emergency, a plan will help reduce stress, because everyone will know how to respond. Practice your plan several times each year.

**Be Informed:** Become knowledgeable about potential emergencies and know where to obtain vital information. Knowing what may happen and how you can help is an effective defense against a disaster.

The following fire prevention and safety tips are provided by FDNY and ARC/GNY:

- **Take care of your smoke alarm:** Install smoke alarms outside each sleeping area and on each level of your home. Check each smoke alarm once a month and replace dead batteries as soon as possible. Dust your smoke alarms once a month.
- **Have a fire extinguisher:** Know how to use the fire extinguisher. Recharge the extinguisher according to manufacturer's instructions.

- **Have an escape route:** Determine at least two ways to escape from every room of your home, and consider escape ladders for bedrooms on the second floor. Pick a location a safe distance from your home to meet after a fire. Practice your escape plan at least twice a year.
- **Stay in the room with the door closed** if smoke, heat or flames block your exit routes. Signal for help using a bright-colored cloth at a window. If there is a phone in the room, call the fire department and tell them where you are.
- **Escape safely:** Once you have exited, stay out of your home. Call the fire department from your neighbor's home. If you must exit through smoke, crawl low beneath the smoke. Use your second way out if fire or smoke is blocking your original escape route. Feel the doorknob of a closed door before opening it. If it is hot, don't open that door. Remember to stop, drop and roll if your clothing catches on fire.

The American Red Cross in Greater New York is a key humanitarian partner and a vital participant in New York's plans and programs to help the nine million people in New York City and Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Sullivan counties prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. ARC/GNY provides immediate aid to more than 100,000 people affected by 3,000 emergencies a year, including fires, floods, building collapses and blackouts. Given the uncertainties of today's world, the chapter is accelerating its collaboration with partner agencies to develop and implement readiness plans to respond to major natural and man-made disasters. The chapter also helps New York residents and businesses prepare for emergencies by offering hundreds of courses in first aid, CPR and aquatics and free emergency preparedness training programs and resources.

ARC/GNY is not a governmental organization and relies on individual and corporate gifts, special events and grants from foundations and local, state and federal government to fund its essential programs and services. For more information about volunteering, donating and training, call 1-877 REDCROSS (1-877-733-2767), or visit [www.nyredcross.org](http://www.nyredcross.org).

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