



NFPA Position Statement

The Sleeping Room Door: Open or Closed?

The Educational Messages Advisory Committee (EMAC) met on March 30, 2016 to discuss the fire and life safety issues associated with sleeping in a room with the door open or closed. The Committee recognizes that many homes do not have NFPA's recommended smoke alarm coverage and some residents use alternative sleeping areas. As a result, the Committee critically examined the issues that impact educational messaging around this topic. Variables include:

- Will a closed door delay early warning from a smoke alarm located outside the sleeping room?
- Will a single station smoke alarm, installed in the sleeping room with the door closed, provide early warning to a fire outside the sleeping area to allow for safe escape?
- Does a closed sleeping room door impact the use of that door as the primary escape route out of the room?
- What is the impact of a closed door when the fire originates in the sleeping room and no smoke alarm is present in the room?
- About one-quarter of home fire deaths occur from fires that originate in sleeping rooms. How will a closed sleeping room door impact the rates of fatalities?
- Does closing the sleeping room door have the potential to increase risk of injury or death from fire?
- Does a closed sleeping room door have different implications for special populations such as those who have mobility, sensory, or cognitive disabilities?
- Will a closed sleeping room door reduce fatalities in homes if working smoke alarms are not present?

Based on these and other unanswered questions, the Committee recommends additional research to examine these and other variables.

The current message in the 2015 Educational Messages Desk Reference is:

- If you sleep with the bedroom door closed, install smoke alarms inside and outside the bedroom. For the best protection, make sure all smoke alarms are interconnected.

The Committee came to consensus to modify the message to the 2016 Educational Messages Desk Reference:

- A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat and fire.
- Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area. For the best protection, make sure all smoke alarms are interconnected.

The Educational Messages Advisory Committee meets periodically to review NFPA's fire safety education messages and provide recommendations to NFPA for updating and revising the messages. When applicable, the messages are made consistent with NFPA's codes, standards, and related criteria. The Committee comprises national, state, and local fire and life safety experts.