

## Every Second Counts: Fire Safety Webinar for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Adults, Children and Their Families

(Richmond, VA – Sept. 29, 2017)

Virginia Hands & Voices has announced that it is partnering with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Virginia Fire and Life Safety Coalition (VFLSC) to offer two free Webinars specifically designed for families with hearing loss. Deaf and hard-of-hearing adults and families of children with hearing loss are encouraged to attend one of two sessions offered on Wednesday, November 8, 2017.

“Most of us know that people with hearing loss of any kind are at increased risk during a fire,” said Valerie Abbott with Virginia Hands & Voices. “But, most of us don’t realize how unprepared we really are. Fire safety planning should be something we talk about frequently, just like IEPs, hearing devices and communication choices. It’s equally important.”

Meredith Hawes with the NFPA was excited when Virginia Hands & Voices reached out to inquire about specialized training for families. “This has been one of my personal missions for a long time,” Ms. Hawes stated. “Today, people only have 2-3 minutes to escape a home fire. That’s dramatically different from 30 years ago when we had more time. We must educate people with hearing loss, and the fire service as well, about smoke alarm options and escape plans for the Deaf. Their options are different and need to be thought about and implemented ahead of time.”

On Wednesday, November 8 at 10:00am and 7:00pm ET, the NFPA will host a live, online Webinar. Topics will include information on specialized smoke alarms, fire escape planning and how to communicate with emergency personnel. Participants will register in advance and can participate from their computer from anywhere in Virginia. The 7:00pm ET live Webinar presentation will also be broadcast on a large screen at the Henrico Training Center at 7701 East Parham Road, Henrico, VA 23294. This will enable individuals and families who prefer to attend the training in person to do so. Interpreters and captioning will be provided.

The Virginia Fire and Life Safety Coalition believes that this program goes hand-in-hand with their mission of saving lives through education, advocacy and shared resources. “Educating the public as well as fire service professionals is what we are all about,” said J.D. Jenkins with VFLSC. “Talking about what we can do better at home and on the job is where improvement starts, then plans can be created and implemented by families and in the local departments. This opportunity to reach the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community is fantastic.”

The project team is grateful to the Virginia State Fire Marshal’s Office and Kidde for their donations of specialized smoke alarms and their support of this program.

All participants must register by November 1, 2017. Visit [www.nfpa.org/training-and-events/by-type/webinars](http://www.nfpa.org/training-and-events/by-type/webinars), select the **Every Second Counts for Everyone** Webinar (10:00am or 7:00pm session) on November 8. Every registrant who lives in Virginia, has someone with hearing loss living in the home and who attends the Webinar or in-person presentation will be entered into a drawing for a specialized smoke alarm.

### **About the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)**

Founded in 1896, NFPA is a global, non-profit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. The association delivers

information and knowledge through more than 300 consensus codes and standards, research, training, education, outreach and advocacy; and by partnering with others who share an interest in furthering the NFPA mission. For more information visit [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org). All NFPA codes and standards can be viewed online for free at [www.nfpa.org/freeaccess](http://www.nfpa.org/freeaccess).

#### **About the Virginia Fire and Life Safety Coalition (VFLSC)**

The VFLSC is a non-profit organization comprised of a diverse group of fire and life safety educators from around the Commonwealth. This group meets regularly to share knowledge, plan events and further the profession of community risk reduction. For more information visit <https://www.vflsc.org/>.

#### **About the Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office**

The mission of the Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office is to make fire safety a way of life in the Commonwealth of Virginia. For more information visit <https://www.vafire.com/state-fire-marshals-office/>

#### **About Virginia Hands & Voices**

Virginia Hands & Voices is a non-profit, parent-driven organization made up of families of children with hearing loss, Deaf adults and professionals. They are non-biased about communication methodologies and believe that families can make the best choices for their child if they have access to good information and support. For more information visit [www.vahandsandvoices.org](http://www.vahandsandvoices.org) or their Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/VirginiaHandsVoices/](http://www.facebook.com/VirginiaHandsVoices/).

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