

The importance of home fire safety

Brendan Robertson – Geelong, Australia

For nearly four decades, Brendan Robertson has dedicated his life to saving people from fires. The firefighter, based in Geelong, Australia, feels compelled to advocate for fire safety because of a heartbreaking personal loss – his 25-year-old brother, Stephen, died in a house fire.

Stephen had a working smoke detector in the hallway outside his room but not one in the bedroom. Robertson is convinced his brother would have survived if that small, inexpensive device had been installed.

“After losing my brother, I made a promise to myself to educate as many people as possible [about] preparing their homes and being aware of the dangers of fire,” Robertson said.

Alarming statistics

Here’s the reality:

- Three out of five deaths happened in homes with no working smoke alarms
- Nearly a fourth of all house fires started in the bedroom
- Investigations of house fires revealed nearly half of the homes had smoke detectors with missing or disconnected batteries
- The risk of dying in a home fire is cut in half if you have a working smoke detector

The steps for prevention are not difficult or expensive, but it does require you to test the devices and change the batteries annually. The amount of time a smoke detector gives you could make the difference in whether you and your loved ones make it out safely.

In memory of Stephen, Robertson is determined to educate as many people as he can. Along with fire safety, he trains people on what to do when smoke and flames are spotted and how to recover following a fire. The knowledge that a single detector could have meant he would spend this holiday with his brother drives him to help others avoid the same grief and loss. Robertson continues to reach out to as many people as possible because fire safety is not just a job – it’s a way to honor his brother.



