

# Sound News

November 2016

Volume 29 Number 11

## ***How can I get a smoke alarm for people with hearing loss?*** ***What you need to know!*** By Lesley and Tim Bergquist

Most people don't think about whether or not they can hear their fire alarm. They may even test it to check, BUT have you had someone else turn it on when you are not wearing your aids *and* you are asleep? Most of us take our aids / cochlear implants off at night and it is always easier to hear a sound when you are awake, alert *and* expecting to hear the sound.

The type of alarms we need provide a bright flashing strobe light that is in a location *where we will see it*. There are also systems that have bed shakers, but for now we will cover the strobe type.

There are "wall mounted", "ceiling mounted" and "plug in". Some have a battery back up, but strobe alarms need to be hard wired in to your electric system. If you already have regular fire alarms hard wired into your living space, they can be replaced with strobes. This should be done by a licensed electrician to insure it meets local codes.

Some models also include carbon dioxide detectors which are a good option if you have any gas appliances. If you have a larger home it is a good idea to have the same brand through out so they can be "interconnected". That means that a fire in the kitchen will set off all the alarms.

The "plug in" variety are usually used in temporary situations like hotel accommodation kits, single room spaces, travel trailers or RVs.

Prices vary widely for the same models. The Kidde shown below (does not have a carbon dioxide detector) range from over \$80.00 down to \$53 on the Internet. We recommend using only sites that you trust. This is also the only model that we have found locally at Home Depot for \$65. This is one of the less expensive models.



Gentex 7139 CS

According to Consumer Reports the main manufacturers of smoke detectors and CO alarms are First Alert and Kidde, representing 3/4 of the market.

We cannot recommend or endorse a specific model or brand, but this article is meant to give you basic information regarding what is available to improve your safety.

If anyone has more information on this topic please contact us via e-mail and we will share it with our readers.



First Alert -BRK Brands SL177  
Hearing Impaired Strobe Light



Kidde Hardwire Interconnectable  
120 Volt Auxiliary Device-Strobe  
Light Model# SLED177i



## Editors' Notes

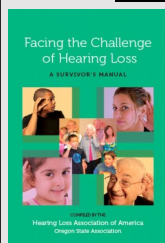
This month has a variety of topics, including three articles on fire safety for hard of hearing people, the subject of November's general meeting.

In addition, there is a short announcement about the passing of Everett Swezey, the husband of Karen Swezey, one of the founders of the chapter.

Lesley and Tim

## Available at the Eugene Public Library!

### New Survivor's Manuals



#### FREE to Anyone

\*\*\*\*\*

They keep 2 copies to check out on the second floor. We supply the free ones.

Donations appreciated.

Cost to mail copies is \$4 each or 20 for \$35

PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402



*Speak up! - If you don't ask for accommodations for your hearing loss, no one realizes there is a problem. This myth affects all of us!*

Members: if you have **changed your e-mail** address please notify Karin Smith of the change at: [karinsm@efn.org](mailto:karinsm@efn.org)

Hearing Loss Assoc.-Lane County Oregon information calls are taken by Linda Diaz, 541-790-1290

**Sound News** is published monthly for members of Hearing Loss Association of America Lane County Oregon Chapter. Annual chapter fee of \$10.00 can be mailed to HLAA-LC, PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402.

## Everett Swezey Remembered!

Everett Swezey, husband of Karen Swezey, passed away on Thursday, October 6 surrounded by family at home. An obituary was placed in the Sunday, October 16 edition of the *Register Guard*, page B4. A memorial service/celebration of life was held on Saturday, October 22 at Shadow Hills Country Club. He was always a caring and supportive part of our chapter.



The family asks that in lieu of flowers, memorial donations be made to:  
Hearing Loss Association of Oregon  
P.O. Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402  
Memo "Swezey"

These funds will be used for assistive devices to be used by hospice caregivers.

## Volunteers Needed!

The chapter has purchased 21 clear acrylic holders. Each one holds about seven *Survivor's Manuals*. We are looking for people who would take one to an audiologists/dispensers' office or other location. In addition, we are asking that you keep the holder filled as needed. If you are interested, please contact Lesley Bergquist at [lesleyb@earthlink.net](mailto:lesleyb@earthlink.net).



### Officers

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**Article Deadline: Second Thursday each month**  
**Newsletter Editors Lesley & Tim Bergquist**  
**Typesetting & Design Lesley & Tim Bergquist**

**National website: [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)**  
**Oregon website: [www.hlaa-or.org](http://www.hlaa-or.org)**  
**Chapter website: [www.hearinglosslane.org](http://www.hearinglosslane.org)**



# Fire Safe and Sound

## A Fire Safety Factsheet for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing

**T**here are 11 million deaf or hard of hearing Americans who are unable to rely on the life-saving warning sound of a working smoke alarm to alert them of fire. It is crucial that this audience is aware of the availability of flashing or vibrating smoke alarms, and the importance of proper escape planning.

The U. S. Fire Administration (USFA), a part of the U. S. Department of Homeland Security, encourages the hearing impaired population to practice the following precautionary steps.

### WHY ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING PERSONS AT RISK?

- Decreased hearing may limit a person's ability to take quick action and escape during a fire emergency.
- Depending on physical limitations, many of the actions an individual can take to protect themselves from the dangers of fire may require help from caretaker, neighbor, or outside source.

### INSTALL AND MAINTAIN SMOKE ALARMS

Deaf or hard of hearing persons cannot rely on the traditional audible smoke alarm, but can rely on visual alarms equipped with strobe lights.

- Contact your local fire department for information about obtaining a flashing or vibrating smoke alarm.
- Install a flashing or vibrating smoke alarm on every level of your home. Test all smoke alarms monthly and change the batteries at least once a year. Your chances of surviving a home fire are far greater if you have the initial warning from a smoke alarm.

### DON'T ISOLATE YOURSELF

- Be sure to inform family members, the building manager, or a neighbor

of your fire safety plan and practice it with them.

- Contact your local fire department on a non-emergency telephone number (use appropriate TTY devices if necessary) and explain your special needs. Your local fire department will be able to help you with your escape plan and may also be able to perform a home inspection, as well as offer suggestions about smoke alarm placement.
- Ask emergency providers to keep your special needs information on file.

### PLAN YOUR ESCAPE

- Practice escape plans every month.
- Practice escaping from every room in the home. The best plans have two ways to get out of each room.
- Make sure that windows are not stuck, screens can be taken out quickly and that security bars can be properly opened.

### IN CASE OF FIRE

- When a fire occurs, do not waste any time saving property.
- If you must escape through smoke, remember to crawl low, under the smoke and keep your mouth covered.
- Never open doors that are hot to the touch.

- Designate a meeting place outside the building and take attendance.
- Once out, stay out! Remember to escape first, then notify the fire department using the 911 system or proper local emergency number in your area.

### KNOW YOUR ABILITIES

Remember, fire safety is your personal responsibility... *Fire Stops With You!*



#### For more information contact:

The U. S. Fire Administration  
16825 South Seton Avenue  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727  
or

Visit the USFA Web site:  
[www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov)



**Homeland  
Security**



# Fire safety checklist for individuals with hearing loss

Contributed by [Debbie Clason](#), staff writer, *Healthy Hearing* | Monday, October 13th, 2014

If you or someone you love is deaf or has [hearing loss](#), October is a good month to have a discussion about fire safety. Here's a checklist of things you can do to make sure everyone in your family — regardless of their ability to hear — can get out of the house safely in the event of a fire.

## Be preventive

According to the National Safety Council (NCS), there were 3,100 unintentional deaths related to fire in 2010. Fires are the fourth highest cause of accidental death in the United States and most house fires occur during the night when people are asleep. As the weather turns cooler, the risk of fire in the home increases. Of course the best way to survive a home fire is to not have one in the first place. Take a look around your home and make sure:

- electrical cords are not frayed, loose, or hidden under rugs
- outlets are not overloaded with plugs
- light fixtures have the correct bulb wattage
- lamps and night lights do not touch any fabric
- to schedule an annual maintenance check for your furnace or heating system
- electrical blankets and space heaters are unplugged when not in use
- your wood-burning fireplace is professionally cleaned once a year
- replace or repair appliances when they spark, overheat or smell unusual
- know the phone number for the local fire department
- smoke alarm batteries have been replaced within the past six months



*Did you know October is fire safety month? This is especially important for individuals with hearing loss to make sure they have the right equipment!*

## Have the right equipment

**Smoke alarms:** Smoke alarms save lives; however, since traditional models emit high-pitched, 60 decibel sounds when they're activated, they aren't effective for those who are deaf or have hearing loss. Fortunately, most major smoke alarm companies offer devices which use a different method to alert individuals to the danger in their home. These alerting devices include: strobe light smoke alarms, which have flashing lights strong enough to wake a sleeping person, also include vibration notification appliances which shake your bed or pillow. Other models have louder, lower pitched alarms to alert those who cannot hear high pitched sounds. These different devices are especially important for nighttime when individuals typically do not wear their hearing aids.

**Fire extinguishers:** Make sure your home has at least one working fire extinguisher. Everyone who lives there should know where it's located and how to use it. If you don't know how to use a fire extinguisher, contact your local fire department for instruction.

## Plan your escape

If the last time you talked to your family about an escape route was when Sparky the Fire Dog came to visit your elementary school class, it's time to make another plan. The National Safety Council recommends each family has a fire escape plan that they practice at least once a month. Even if you don't have any kids left at home, make a plan for what you will do in the event of fire. If you need help getting started, the NCS has a checklist you can use which includes blank grids for you to visibly chart your plan of escape. Once you've planned an escape route, make sure everyone in your family knows where to meet after they're safely out of the house.

## Communicate

For personal safety reasons, placing signs in your window to alert the police and fire department of your hearing loss is not recommended, but letting them know where you live is a good idea.



## Out and About

**Andrea Cabral** has a number of outreach activities scheduled during October:

- the Oregon Conference on Aging at OSU in Corvallis (October 12)
- the Samaritan Living Well Expo at Heritage Mall in Albany (October 22)
- the Mill Casino Work Life Balance Wellness Fair in Coos Bay (October 26)
- the 2016 Good Life Conference at the Florence Events Center (October 27)



**Our chapter will follow the same guidelines for canceling the general meetings as the Eugene**

**4J school district. If the schools are closed that day or close early we will not have a general meeting.**

## Do you come to our general meetings?

We have had low attendance at our monthly meetings and have had little response from earlier requests for feed back. *If you do not attend regularly, please answer the following question and mail to our PO Box* so we can make an informed decision regarding whether to continue our meetings or close our chapter. To remain a part of Hearing Loss Association of America (national) we are required to hold 10 meetings a year.

### I do not attend meetings because: (please check all that apply.)

- ☐ I have a conflict with another group / organization.
- ☐ I do not find the topics interesting.
- ☐ It is too late in the day with the 7-9pm time.
- ☐ I do not have transportation.
- ☐ I have not felt welcome.
- ☐ Other- please specify \_\_\_\_\_



**Why join National?** - Who do you think *advocates for us* on a national level so we are included in plans for education, health benefits, phone, TV access and the right to have access to other information?

Annual membership in HLAA is \$20 student, \$35 individuals, \$45 couple/family, \$60 professional. It includes the award-winning bi-monthly magazine, *Hearing Loss*. Write HLAA, 7910 Woodmont Ave., Ste. 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814; 301-657-2248 (Voice); 301-913-9413 (Fax) or [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org). Get the latest e-news: [www.hearingloss.org/content/e-news-sign](http://www.hearingloss.org/content/e-news-sign).



### Hearing Loss Assoc. of Lane County Chapter Fee and National Membership Form

Please fill out this form /survey and turn in at the general meeting or mail to HLAA - Lane Co., PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402.

I have enclosed: **Chapter fee** \_\_\_\_\_ \$10.00 per person,

Chapter Donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**National dues** \_\_\_\_\_ \$35.00 (regular), \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 student, \_\_\_\_\_ \$45 couple, \_\_\_\_\_ \$60 professional\*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation (*former occupation if retired*): \_\_\_\_\_

Why are you joining us? \_\_\_\_\_

What most interests/puzzles you about hearing or hearing devices? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in volunteering? What would you like to do? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about us \_\_\_\_\_?

Would you like to be on our e-mail news list: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

\*Donations to either the national organization or our local chapter are always welcome and are tax deductible. (We do not share our information lists with anyone else. Receipts will gladly be provided.)

### **Memorial/Honorarium or Special Donations**

I enclose a donation of:

\_\_\_\$10 \_\_\_\$20 \_\_\_\$50 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

This gift is In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Birthday

\_\_\_\_\_ Anniversary \_\_\_\_\_ Holidays

\_\_\_\_\_ Marriage

\_\_\_\_\_ Survivors' Manual \_\_\_\_\_ Other

**Please send notification of this gift to:**

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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

This copy is free -  
please feel free  
to take it.

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If the month & year on your mailing label have already passed, it's time to renew your membership! Please use the form on page 5 to pay your dues today!




**Hearing Loss Association of America**  
Lane County Oregon Chapter


**HLAA-LC**  
**General Meeting!**  
**7-9 pm**

**November 8, 2016**

2580 Hilyard St., Eugene, OR



**EUGENE  
SPRINGFIELD  
FIRE**




**Fire and Injury  
Prevention**  
presented by  
**Amy Lindner**

This will be a general fire and injury prevention discussion with question and answer time.

Amy has been in the fire service over 20 years serving in a variety of roles. When not working, she is active in dog training and animal assisted therapy and crisis response work.

\*\*\*\*\*  
For more information, contact: [lesleyb@earthlink.net](mailto:lesleyb@earthlink.net).  
Please put "HLAA-LC Meeting" in the subject line.  
\*\*\*\*\*

**WE ARE CHANGING** the monthly general meeting time for the coming year. Our **Holiday Potluck and gift exchange** will be from **5 pm to 7pm on Thursday, December 8th.**



General membership meetings are currently the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7 pm. They are accessible for all degrees of hearing loss by amplification - loop assistive listening systems.

**Real time captioning by CC Reporting (Debby, Chris, Jan and Sara)**

**Calendar**

**Board Meeting**  
**November 1,**  
**3:30 to 5 pm**  
Members Welcome  
Hilyard Community Ctr.