



**WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE ARTS
DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES**

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Free smoke alarms available to West Virginians who are deaf or hard of hearing

Charleston, W.Va. (Nov. 11, 2013) – West Virginia homeowners who are deaf or hard of hearing can access free accessible smoke alarms from the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WVCDHH).

The presence of an operable smoke alarm substantially reduces the risk of death in residential fires. According to the National Fire Protection Association's September 2011 report, titled "Smoke Alarms in U.S. Home Fires," almost two-thirds of home fire deaths resulted from fires in property without working smoke alarms.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing often cannot hear a standard home smoke alarm and accessible smoke alarms are more expensive than standard alarms.

The West Virginia Accessible Smoke Alarm Project (ASAP) is distributing accessible smoke alarms to eligible individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing in order to provide a higher level of safety in the homes of these individuals.

To qualify, applicants must live in West Virginia and own their own home.

Interested individuals must submit a completed application, a proof of hearing loss form signed by a physician and an audiogram to the WVCDHH.

There are three types of alarms available, which include features such as extra loud warning signals, strobe light signals or bed shaking tactile signals and/or lighting signals, like a clock that flashes the word fire. Eligible participants' homes will be assessed to determine the best and most effective alarm or alarms for the individual.

For an application or more information, visit <http://www.wvdhhr.org/WVCDHH/asap.cfm>. You may also contact the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at 866-461-3578 (V/TTY), 304-932-0687 (videophone) or dhrwvcdhh@wv.gov (email).

ASAP is funded by a grant from the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and administered by the WVCDHH.

DRS, a division of the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts, is the state agency responsible for the federal vocational rehabilitation program in West Virginia. Each year, DRS helps thousands of West Virginia residents with disabilities meet their employment goals by providing individualized work-related counseling, training, job placement and other vocational rehabilitation services through its 31 field offices across the state.

WVCDHH, an office within the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, advocates for, develops and coordinates public policies, regulations and programs to assure full and equal opportunity for West Virginians who are deaf and hard of hearing.

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