



Latah County Idaho
latahcert.us
contact@latahcert.us

NOVEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

CERT MEETINGS:

Latah CERT – Next meeting is on February 4th, 2026, at 6:00 pm – Latah County Fairgrounds Classroom, ID.

Whitman CERT – Next meeting is January 6th, 2026, at 6:00 pm – Sacred Heart Social Hall, 440 NE Ash St., Pullman, WA.

FIRE SAFETY – Lithium-Ion Batteries & Smoke Detectors

The annual Fire Prevention Week was in October and it's them is a timely topic for the holidays and gift buying. This safety campaign is the longest-running public health observance in the U.S., dating to 1922, and is intended to raise fire safety awareness and help protect homes and families. The 2025 theme was "Charge into Fire Safety: 3 Steps" which is covered here. This is also a good time of the year to remind everyone of the dangers of home fires and the importance of protecting your home with smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, and carbon monoxide detectors.



Most of the electronics we use in our homes every day — smartphones, tablets, power and lawn tools, laptops, e-cigarettes, headphones, and toys, to name just a few — are powered by lithium-ion batteries. In fact, most everything that's rechargeable uses this type of battery.

If not used correctly or if damaged, lithium-ion batteries can **overheat, start a fire, or even explode**. To reduce these risks, look around your home — it's important to know which devices are powered by them. Lithium-ion batteries are powerful, convenient, and they're just about everywhere. This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign helps people understand the importance of using these batteries correctly to prevent fires in the home and to follow the **Buy, Charge, and Recycle Safely** approach" (source: National Fire Prevention Association – NFPA.org)

BUY ONLY LISTED PRODUCTS

- When buying a product that uses a lithium-ion battery, take time to research it. Look for a stamp from a nationally recognized testing lab on the packaging and product, which means that it meets important safety standards.
- Many products sold online and in stores may not meet safety standards and could increase the risk of fire.

RECYCLE BATTERIES RESPONSIBLY

- ☒ Don't throw lithium-ion batteries in the trash or regular recycling bins because they could catch fire.
- ☒ Recycling your device or battery at a safe battery recycling location is the best way to dispose of them. Visit call2recycle.org to find a recycling spot near you.

CHARGE DEVICES SAFELY

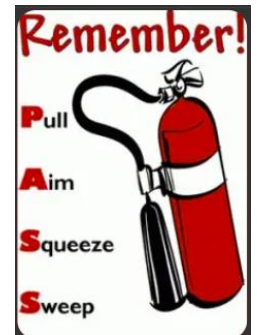
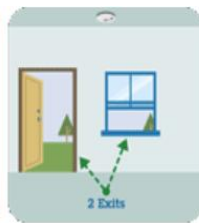
- ☑ Always use the cords that came with the product to charge it. Follow the instructions from the manufacturer.
- ☑ If you need a new charger, buy one from the manufacturer or one that the manufacturer has approved.
- ☑ Charge your device on a hard surface. **DO NOT** charge it under a pillow, on a bed, or on a couch. This could cause a fire.
- ☑ Don't overcharge your device. Unplug it or remove the battery when its fully charged.

SMOKE ALARMS/DETECTORS

According to the American Red Cross, home fires claim more lives in a typical year than all natural disasters combined. Home fires claim seven lives every day in the U.S. Protecting your household should include testing your smoke alarms each month and practicing your escape plan until everyone can get out in less than two minutes. Home fires can occur any time in any place. The sooner an alarm alerts you to a fire, the sooner you can get out. This is critical because fire experts say you may have less than **two minutes** to escape a burning home before it's too late. (source: American Red Cross – Redcross.org)

Tips for creating your home fire escape plan and practicing your 2-minute drill:

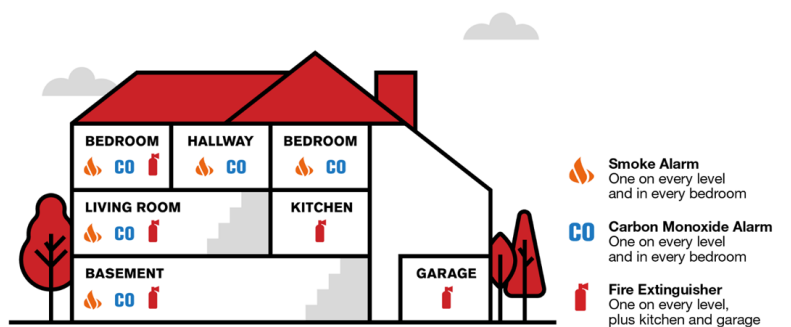
- Everyone in your household should know two ways to escape from each room in your home.
- Smoke is dangerous. Get low and go!
- Decide where to meet once you get outside. Select a meeting spot at a safe distance away from your home, such as a neighbor's home or landmark like a specific tree in your front yard, where everyone knows to meet.
- Get out and stay out. Never go back inside for people, pets or things.
- If a fire starts, you may have less than two minutes to get to safety. Time your fire drill and find out: what's your escape time?
- While practicing your escape plan, teach children what a smoke alarm sounds like. Talk about fire safety and what to do in an emergency.



Make a home escape plan. Draw a map of each level of your home. Show all doors and windows. Go to each room and point to the two ways out. Practice the plan with everyone in your household.

SMOKE ALARM SAFETY:

- ✓ Place smoke alarms on each level of your home, including inside and outside bedrooms and sleeping areas.
- ✓ In addition to testing your alarms once a month, change the batteries at least once a year, if your model requires it.
- ✓ Also check the manufacturer's date of your smoke alarms. If they're 10 years or older, they need to be replaced because the sensor becomes less sensitive over time. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.



Also install carbon monoxide alarms on every level and in every bedroom. Be prepared with fire extinguishers. Fire extinguishers help stop small fires from causing more damage and should be kept accessible on every level of the home, especially in the kitchen and garage. Ensure you know how to operate a fire extinguisher before needing to use one. (source:Firstalert.com)