

Operation Installation

Purpose: To eliminate deaths from house fires in Dallas, Texas by installing smoke alarms.

History: The Injury Prevention Center and the Dallas Fire Department have worked collaboratively since 1999. Fourteen years of data has been gathered on fires that have caused injuries and deaths in Dallas. That data is used to identify which neighborhoods are most at risk for an injurious fire. Each month volunteers join the DFD and IPC staff to go door to door in designated neighborhoods to install smoke alarms. The presence of a fire engine tells the community we are here and lends security and credibility to the project. Currently the Center for Disease Control has given the DFD enough funding to install smoke alarms every month for three years.

Process:

- Operation Installation is held the third Saturday of each month from 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Each time, 16-40 volunteers (groups or individuals) are needed to assist the DFD staff.
- Volunteers meet at designated site, near the installation area, at 8:30 for a quick training.
- Four teams are formed and given the map to show them which blocks they will be working. The team consists of one engine, DFD inspectors, and volunteers. Each team has a trained captain to give instructions. Each team is given ladders, drills, and other needed equipment. Throughout the work time, a runner comes by to check the team and respond to any needs of the volunteers.
- The work for the volunteer consists of assisting the DFD staff by talking with the residents, filling out paper work, carrying supplies, and assisting with the installation of the smoke alarm. The DFD personnel do the actual installation of the alarm. There is walking required as you go from house to house.
- Most volunteers report that they enjoy this activity because they know at the end of the day that they have really done something that may well save a life. Volunteers like the camaraderie with the DFD personnel. Some groups get to visit the fire station and climb inside a truck. Volunteers also enjoy meeting the residents and are pleased at the warm reception they receive.
- Data is collected for an ongoing study to prove that this program does save lives