

APRIL: Week 4 – Security Bars

Overview: Security bars are a common method of household protection against burglary but are dangerous for residents when it comes to egress from a fire. If a fire breaks out in a home, security bars without quick-release devices block crucial fire exits. Between 2015 and 2019 in Tennessee, 12 residents died in home fires where security bars were a contributing factor to the fire death. Another 16 residents died where locked exits were a contributing factor. On average, around 5 people die every year in home fires where a security bar or locked exit prevented them from escaping the fire.

Security bars aren't the only method of household protection that can cause a fire hazard. Deadbolts that require a key to unlock from the inside can cost precious seconds when trying to escape a home fire. If you are using deadbolts in your home, make sure there is a quick-release knob instead of a key. In addition to security bars and deadbolts, windows that have been wedged, painted, or sealed shut in any other way can have deadly consequences. Always make sure your doors and windows can be easily unlocked and opened in case of a fire!

Resources: The following resources are available:

- Why are window security bars dangerous?
 - http://www.mcgarryandmadsen.com/inspection/Blog/Entries/2014/3/22_Why_are_window_security_bars_dangerous.html
- Options for home security bars that will allow emergency exit
 - <http://wreg.com/2016/09/13/options-for-home-security-bars-that-will-allow-emergency-exit/>
- Home security features partially blamed for 9 deaths
 - <http://www.wmcactionnews5.com/story/33076705/home-security-features-partially-blamed-for-9-deaths>
- Example of quick-release device security bar, available online
 - <http://www.homedepot.com/p/Mr-Goodbar-Swing-Away-29-in-to-42-in-Adjustable-Width-6-Bar-Window-Guard-White-s202-E-29-42/301438138>
- Construction concerns: residential door locks
 - <https://www.fireengineering.com/2010/07/26/304803/cc-door-locks/#gref>

Media Tools: Use the following pre-written media releases and social media posts in your efforts to promote security bar safety:

- **Twitter**
 - Security bars can be a fire safety hazard! Only install security bars with a quick-release device. @TNCommerceInsur #FireSafeTN
 - Save precious seconds in a home fire and make sure your windows and doors can be quickly unlocked and opened!
- **Facebook**
 - Security bars can be a fire safety hazard! Only install security bars with a quick-release device, as these hazards can impact your ability to escape a house fire. For more info, visit <https://www.tn.gov/commerce/fire-prevention>
 - Save precious seconds in a home fire and make sure your windows and doors can be quickly unlocked and opened!

Educator Tip: Canvass your area, taking a visual survey of any homes that have security bars. Commit to an in-home visit with the residents in those homes, checking to see if the security bars have quick-release devices. If they don't, offer the residents some options on where they can find quick-release device security bars.

NFPA Messaging:

Home Fire Escape

Planning

4.1.9 If allowed in your community and approved by code as a secondary means of escape, windows with security bars, grills, and window guards should have easy-to-use quick-release devices from inside the home.