

Smoke is the silent killer in home fires



abigail van buren

• dear abby

DEAR ABBY: Smoke from a fire is sneaky, a silent killer. If a home fire breaks out while we are sleeping, we will not hear smoke as it creeps into our bedrooms, banking up the walls, curling across the ceiling. We will snuggle deeper into the blankets, unaware of the poisons enveloping us.

with scorching poisonous gases silently extinguishing our lives. That harsh scenario is what happens in home fires in America every single day. According to the Home Safety Council's State of Home Safety in America Report, fire and burns are a leading cause of home injury-related death. To prevent this from happening, we need working smoke alarms.

October is Fire Safety Month, and it's the logical time for all of us to consider how safe we are from fire. The majority of fire deaths occur at home, where we can make simple changes that can help us to stay safer. When it comes to our personal safety and the safety of loved ones, we must hope for the best but prepare for the worst. A safe home is within our hands. — MERI-K APPY, PRESIDENT, HOME SAFETY COUNCIL

DEAR MERI-K: Thank you for the reminder. My experts have stressed to me that every home must have WORKING smoke alarms installed on each level of the house.

Additional smoke detectors should be placed inside rooms where people sleep. The Home Safety Council recommends hard-wired, interconnected smoke alarms powered by household electricity. They should be tied together so that if one alarm signals, they will all signal, regardless of where the fire is detected. And for the "ultimate" in fire protection, nothing compares to automatic fire sprinkler systems, which put water directly onto the flames in the early stages of fire, slowing the spread of deadly smoke and heat.

As "Step One" during Fire Safety Month, please make time this week to ensure you have enough smoke

alarms. Replace batteries in existing alarms and test them once a month. For more information on smoke alarms, escape plans and home fire sprinkler systems, visit www.HomeSafetyCouncil.org.

DEAR ABBY: I threw a party at my house and invited my usual friends. "Dave" arrived wearing a pair of sunglasses, even though my party was at night. He perched the glasses over the bill on his baseball cap and left them there all evening.

The party was a barbecue outside in my back yard, and my 8-month-old Doberman, "Rommel," was running around. At some point, Dave's glasses fell off and Rommel used

them for a toy. I had no idea what had happened until the next day, when Dave called and asked me to look for them.

When Dave found out my dog had ruined the glasses, he demanded that I pay for them to the tune of \$350! I don't think I owe him any money. Am I wrong? — DOG LOVER IN LAS VEGAS

DEAR DOG LOVER: No, you are not wrong. The sunglasses were Dave's property, and he should have made sure they were protected. As his host, you had enough responsibilities on your shoulders during the evening. Dave shouldn't blame others for his carelessness. (Nice try, though.)

SATURDAY EVENING OCT. 2, 2004. Table with columns for time slots (6 pm, 6:30, 7 pm, etc.) and program titles like Cold Case Files, City Confidential, The First 48, etc.

SUNDAY EVENING OCT. 3, 2004. Table with columns for time slots (6 pm, 6:30, 7 pm, etc.) and program titles like Good Will Hunting, Desperate Housewives, Boston Legal, etc.

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MONDAY EVENING OCT. 4, 2004. Table with columns for time slots (6 pm, 6:30, 7 pm, etc.) and program titles like Rampage Killers: Looking for Signs, The Benefactor, Growing Up..., etc.

Saturday and Sunday Movies SATURDAY MORNING 10:00 25/35 IND Movie "Parenthood" (1989, Comedy Drama) Steve Martin, Mary Steenburgen, Dianne Wiest. A family experiences the pressures of raising children. Directed by Ron Howard.