

Rockaway Township Report



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973-627-7200

www.rockawaytownship.org

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Mayor's Corner



I hope everyone has had the opportunity to enjoy the warming temperatures as spring has sprung! I would like to take this opportunity to wish all those who celebrate a Happy Easter, Chag Pesach Sameach and Happy Ramadan. In addition to getting back to recreation at the Township's many hiking trails and lakes, make sure you stop by one of our many athletic fields to watch a spring sports event, especially at the new Peterson turf fields.

I would like to thank my Administration team and all our department heads for creating our 2023 budget. Not only did the budget presented to the Council have a zero-dollar local tax increase, but it also contained funding for all the services our residents expect and deserve. In addition, there was funding for several community-based events and special projects that I wish to highlight briefly:

- *Rockaway Day 2023* planning is underway. The event will take place on August 19th at Camp

Hudsonia. See our Facebook page for the flier. More details to follow.

- Renovations on the Veterans Memorial at Park Lake will begin in the Spring. In addition, we are re-establishing Rockaway Township's Memorial Day Parade. We're excited to bring this tradition back!
- Plans for phase III of the Peterson Field improvements are currently underway. We will unveil these plans to the public as they become available.

We have been out in the community attending PTA meetings, sports program meetings and club meetings, and it is very clear that public engagement is on the upswing. With that said, I've created several community-based committees to address concerns and to solicit feedback from our residents. These include the Water Quality Committee, Public Safety Committee, and Recreation and Events Committee.

I'm hoping to get a lot of community involvement and feedback on all the committees! If you would like to become involved with one of these groups, please check Facebook for more information.

We continue to recognize local businesses on our Facebook page. Please follow us to find out about their services and how you can take advantage of what they have to offer. If you own a local business and are interested in being recognized, please contact Dave Dyer, Director of Recreation, at ddyer@rockawaytownship.org.

If you have any questions about the activities detailed above, feel free to contact our staff at the Municipal Building. You can visit us at 65 Mount Hope Road or call 973-627-7200. Normal Municipal Building business hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm. Remember to follow Rockaway Township on Facebook, and make www.rockawaytownship.org one of your bookmarks.

As always, I am honored to be your Mayor.

Joe Jackson
Rockaway Township Mayor



Division of Parks employee Morgan Morris captured this lovely photo of a moody sunrise over the Township Municipal Building.

Water Utility Improves Infrastructure & Operations

The Rockaway Township Water Utility is pleased to report that dramatic improvements have been made to infrastructure and overall operations, to help with quality of water being delivered to our customers. Some of the exciting projects/improvements are as follows:

Fox Hills Treatment Plant Modifications

The Water Utility is in the process of modifying the existing Fox Hills Treatment Plant to include Ion Exchange Resin Filtration as part of the water treatment process. This technology will help treat the water supply for Township customers, specifically addressing per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and inorganic contaminants. Our water system currently complies with all standards; with the implementation of this new treatment technology, the Water Utility will be able to supply

cleaner water to customers and will be ahead of future regulatory standards.

Storage Tank Rehabilitation

The Water Utility will begin a complete storage tank rehabilitation of all seven tanks in our system starting this spring. This will dramatically improve the Township's operational capabilities as well as the overall water quality that is being provided to our customers.

Queens Road Water Main Improvements

The Water Utility has already begun outfitting the Queens Road transmission main to allow for normal operations to our customers via a bypassing method as we rehabilitate the existing water infrastructure ahead of proposed roadway improvements.

Well 10 Installation

Beginning in April 2023, the Water Utility will be constructing a well house for the newly developed Well 10 at the

Green Pond Wellfield. The activation of this new well will allow for greater operational flexibility, redundancy for our most critical treatment plant, better water quality for our customers, possible reduction in water purchased to maintain customer demand, and possible ability for the Utility to sell water to neighboring towns for increased revenue.

Leak Detection Survey/Maintenance

The Water Utility will continue with its leak detection survey and maintenance, which began in 2022. Currently, the Utility is at about 18% water loss in the Township's system (at the start of 2022, the Township was at 40%), and we are hoping to decrease that number even further by the end of 2023. Reducing the percentage of loss keeps more water in our distribution pipes for our customers, which equates to less energy and money used to produce the same level of service for the township.

Suicide: Facts & Resources for Those at Risk

Suicide: A Significant Issue with Far-Reaching Impacts

Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States. Many factors can either increase the risk for suicide or protect against it, and suicide is often connected to other forms of injury and violence. For example, those who have experienced violence, including child abuse, bullying, or sexual violence, have a higher suicide risk. Being connected to family and community support and having easy access to health care can decrease suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States, with 45,979 deaths in 2020. This equates to about one death every 11 minutes. In fact, in 2020 (the most recent year for which data was available), suicide was among the top 10 leading causes of death for people age 10-64, and was the second leading cause of death for those age 10-14 and 25-34. The number of people who think about or attempt suicide is even higher. Fortunately, after increases between 2000 – 2018, suicide rates declined in 2019 and 2020. According to CDC data, New Jersey had the lowest suicide rate in the country, at 7.1 per 100,000 population. This is down from 8.3 per 100,000 in 2015.

Suicide rates vary by race/ethnicity, age and other factors, such as where someone lives. National data indicate the highest rates were among non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Natives and non-Hispanic white populations. Veterans, people who live in rural areas and those who work in certain occupations, such as mining and construction, also suffered higher rates of suicide.


Young people who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual also have higher rates of suicidal thoughts and behavior compared to their peers who identify as heterosexual.

Suicide and suicide attempts cause serious emotional, physical and economic impact. People who attempt suicide and survive may experience serious injuries that can have long-term effects on their health. They may also experience depression and other mental health concerns. Suicide and suicide attempts also affect the health and well-being of friends, loved ones, co-workers and the community. Suicide can cause surviving family and friends to experience shock, anger, guilt, depression or anxiety.

(continued on page six)

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

- Call or text 988
- Chat at 988lifeline.org



Timely Tips from the Tax Collector

Second quarter 2023 property taxes are due May 1, 2023. The last day for payment is May 10, 2023. Please contact the Tax Collector's office if you need to know the amount due.

Residents in need of *Senior Freeze* (property tax reimbursement) assistance may call the State's hotline at 1-800-882-6597. If you require assistance with New Jersey's *Homestead Credit* program may call the State's hotline at 1-888-238-1233. If you have any questions in reference to the above items, please feel free to contact the Tax Collector's office at 973-983-2822. Please note that annual sewer maintenance bills will be available in late May and are due in June 2023.



Payment Information

Residents may now make partial tax payments online through the Township website. Any partial payment must be *enough to cover all interest due* at the time of payment. Any credit left will go toward the oldest principal balance. Please also allow two business days for the payment to process and for the account to be updated. If you have questions or are unsure about how to make a payment, please call the office.

For homeowners using their bank's website to generate a payment, please be aware that these are not electronic transfers between banks. Payments are in the form of material checks that are mailed to the Rockaway Township Municipal Building, so please allow enough time for the check to arrive. Your payment (check) is processed effective the date of receipt, and interest is charged accordingly.

When using your bank's website for payment, we ask that you:

- Please review the account information and update if necessary.
- Please do not use Rockaway Township as your payor, but instead, be more specific. Please use Rockaway Township Tax Collector, Rockaway Township Sewer Maintenance and Rockaway Township Municipal Utility.
- Please provide as much information as possible so payments are applied correctly.
- Payments cannot be held for over 24 hours, so please make sure date of payment is appropriate or it will be returned to you.
- If you are making partial, blanket payments, please reach out to the office so we can note your account. This will better ensure payments are applied correctly.

Mayor's Special Recognition

Mayor Joe Jackson wishes to congratulate the following individuals on their employment with Rockaway Township, and wishes them long, fulfilling careers:

- Thomas Ferry, Police Department
- Michael Bautista, Police Department
- Ryan Keiper, Police Department
- Michael Dezenzo, Police Department
- Ryan McLachlan, Department of Public Works
- Mark Moglia, Division of Health
- Madison Dockray, Division of Health

Mayor Jackson also wishes to congratulate the following employees on their retirements. Thank you for your dedicated service to our residents!

- Timothy Angle, Department of Public Works
- Steve Van Orden, Police Department

Mayor Jackson would like to recognize the following individuals, divisions and departments for their recent accomplishments and hard work, all of which elevates the work of our staff and benefits our residents:

- The Division of Health, for successfully applying for and receiving the Enhancing Local Public Health Infrastructure grant of \$344,795.
- The Department of Public Works, for receiving a \$44,320 NJ Recycling Tonnage grant.

- The Department of Engineering, for receiving a \$224,785 NJDOT Municipal Aid grant for Richard Street improvements.
- The Fire Department, for receiving a \$42,000 American Rescue Plan Firefighter grant.
- The Department of Administration, for receiving a National Opioid Settlement of \$18,892.
- The Police Department, for receiving a \$3,400 Body Armor grant.
- The Office of Emergency Management, for receiving a \$10,000 Emergency Management Performance grant.
- Everett Falt, Township Clerk/Registrar of Vital Statistics, who recently was conferred his Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree from Kean University.
- Ryan Furrey, Water Utility Superintendent, for earning his Sewer C-I license.

Mayor Jackson wishes to recognize Jean Levitan and the Bernstein Family, who donated \$1,000 to the Boys and Girls Recreation Basketball program in memory of Stephen Bernstein, a longtime Rockaway Township resident and boys basketball coach. This donation will go toward the acquisition of new basketball equipment.



Public Works & Recycling Update

Recycling Calendars

Recycling calendars, flyers and other useful items are available on the Township website. If you haven't already visited the site, please go to www.rockawaytownship.org/189/Recycle, click on the *My Schedule* tab and input your home address. Here, you can view or print your personalized collection calendar and sign up for important collection reminders and service interruption alerts. Not sure how to dispose of something? Click the tab for *Waste Wizard* and enter the material you are looking to dispose of. Click on the *Facilities* tab for information about our locations and hours of operation. For additional information, click on the *Print Flyers* tab to learn about single stream recycling, hazardous household waste drop off events, and Rockaway Township's bulk clean-up and vegetative waste collections. Full printouts of the bulk and recycling calendars, flyers and stickers for labeling your receptacles are also available in the Municipal Building lobby.

Single Stream Recycling

Curbside collection of recycling is 'single stream' or 'no sort.' This means you may put cans, bottles, newspapers and cardboard out together. For large amounts of cardboard, you may also break down smaller boxes and place in one large box (three max). Recycling may be placed in tote-style cans (preferred) filled to capacity or in regular garbage cans loaded no heavier than 50 pounds each. Please label all recycling cans (stickers available at Municipal Building free of charge). With various collections of garbage, recycling and vegetative waste picked up on the same day in some cases, it is very important to label your cans to ensure proper collection. All the crews collecting these various materials appreciate your cooperation in this matter. *Please note that recycling brought to our depots is not single stream and must be separated into commingled (cans and bottles), cardboard and newspaper.*

Leaf and Brush Collection takes place weekly now through December 31. Please visit the aforementioned website and input your address for a collection schedule. *Please place at curb by 5:00am of designated day.* Yard waste must be in either brown biodegradable bags or cans labeled *vegetative waste* (stickers available at the Municipal Building free of charge). Landscape barrels are *not accepted*. Cans *must be labeled* and may not be heavier than 50 pounds each. Brush must be tied and bundled, no heavier than 50 pounds per bundle and cut no longer than four feet (branches max 6" diameter). Grass and leaves may be mixed together.

Bulk Collection/Clean Up Week

Residents may put out bulky items that would not generally be placed at the curb with your regular household garbage. Please see the link above to check your collection day(s). Items may include, but are not limited to: mattresses, box springs, couches, toilets, hot water heaters, dressers, end tables, etc. The collection is intended for disposing of a few pieces per month, *not* for emptying a house when moving.

There is a limit to the amount that may be placed curbside. Items must fit into the hopper of a garbage truck and must be able to be crushed. Items that are *not acceptable* include televisions, automotive parts, mirrors, plate glass, paint and building materials (hazardous household materials, sheet rock,

spackle, tile, etc.). If you have a *q u e s t i o n* regarding the suitability of items *f o r b u l k* collection, either check the *Waste Wizard* or call 973-983-2891.

Street Sweeping

Every Road in *R o c k a w a y* Township will be swept one or more times as necessary over the course of the spring, summer and fall. Roads are swept systematically section by section, generally starting with areas surrounding bodies of water, to prevent run off into our waterways and natural resources. Please rest assured your road will be swept. Unfortunately, with a Township this size, there is no way to effectively notify residents regarding a sweeping schedule. If your property permits, please park vehicles off road when possible to allow to road to be swept in its entirety.

Grass – Cut it and Leave it

Grass clippings are a major part of New Jersey's municipal solid waste stream, and as with other highly recyclable materials such as aluminum and steel cans, glass bottles and jars, paper and certain plastic bottles, the recycling of grass clippings helps reduce the amount of waste being collected for disposal. As a New Jersey resident, you are already reducing the amount of landfilled waste by recycling a variety of materials. You can easily recycle the clippings generated each time you mow your lawn, and save time and money by doing so.

Doing your part is simple – just leave the clippings on the lawn when you mow. Grass clippings provide a natural and healthy fertilizer for a growing lawn. For more information, see the *Recycling* section of the Township website.

Spring Has Sprung!

As temperatures warm, you may notice some minor damage created as a result of snow plowing. If you notice that your asphalt berm has been damaged, please contact the Township's Department of Public Works and leave your name and address and extent of the damage. A supervisor will assess the damage and your property will be placed on a list to be repaired as soon as weather and material permit.

Dangerous Road Conditions

Please remember that our residents are the eyes and ears of the community. Should you see a dangerous road condition such as a pothole, collapsing storm drain, downed street sign or tree/branch in the road, please contact the Department of Public Works at 973-983-2891, or call the Police Department after 3:30pm and on weekends at 973-625-4000, to report these conditions. The Department of Public Works sincerely appreciates your notifications, thus enabling us to help provide safer roads.





Township elementary school students and seniors recently spent an afternoon enjoying snacks and board games at the Senior Center. It was a multi-generational afternoon full of fun and smiles.

Update from Recreation

As the weather begins to warm, the Division of Recreation is excitedly preparing for another beautiful season of fun and sun at Mount Hope Pond. Beach badges will be available for purchase beginning on May 1, 2023, via Community Pass. Please [click here](#) to register. Badges are \$25 per person and are available to Township residents only. Children age five and under do not need a badge. Badges must be picked up at the Municipal Building, Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm. Please read all of the guidelines provided during registration. The Division of Recreation would like to thank you in advance for your help in keeping Mount Hope Pond healthy and clean this summer.

The 2023 Summer Playground program will be held at Birchwood, Dwyer and Katherine D. Malone Schools Monday through Friday, 9am to 12pm. The Summer Playground program will begin on Monday, June 26, 2023, and will run through August 4, 2023. Children will participate in a variety of daily activities, attend grade level trips and participate in theme days. The Division of Recreation is presently finalizing a full calendar of fun for all attendees. Registration will open on Monday, May 1, 2023 at 10:00am via Community Pass, and a link will be made available on the Rockaway Township website at that time.

Sports teams are kicking off their spring seasons, and our fields opened for team sports beginning April 1. Please check out the Township website for links to all of the spring sports programs.

The Township's Adult Exercise program continues to run on Tuesdays at the Robert A. Galdon Senior Center, with new eight-week sessions beginning continuously throughout the year. Please check our website for the schedule and more information, or call the Division of Recreation at 973-983-2841.

New Businesses for Rockaway

Following are the local businesses that Mayor Jackson wishes to recognize at this time under his Support Local Businesses initiative:

100% Chiropractic

Sarah Calta, DC, owner
321 Mount Hope Ave., Suite K
Rockaway Township
973-453-6847

Ace-King Cycle & Cargo Transport, LLC

Billy King, owner
973-306-9142

Mayor Jackson also wishes to acknowledge the following Rockaway Township businesses, each of which had a ribbon cutting/opening during the first quarter of 2023. Mayor Jackson encourages residents to visit these establishments:

Crumbl Cookies

395 Mount Hope Ave.
(Rockaway Townsquare Mall, outside circle)

Super Chix Chicken & Custard

321 Mount Hope Ave.
(Rockaway Townsquare Mall, outside circle)

Tango Latin-Asian Fusion Cuisine

301 Mount Hope Ave.
(Rockaway Townsquare Mall)

Kawaii Gifts

301 Mount Hope Ave.
(Rockaway Townsquare Mall)

Café Lombardia

301 Mount Hope Ave.
(Rockaway Townsquare Mall)

Lola's Tex-Mex Cuisine

301 Mount Hope Ave.
(Rockaway Townsquare Mall)



Mayor Joe Jackson is joined by Council President Howard Kritz, Council Vice President Jack Quinn and Council Members Pawel Wojtowicz, Mary Noon, Manny Friedlander, Jonathan Sackett and Rachael Brookes at the ribbon cutting for Crumbl Cookies.

Resources for Those at Risk

(continued from page two)

Prevention Resources

Suicide is preventable and everyone has a role to play in saving lives and creating healthy and strong individuals, families and communities. This requires a comprehensive approach, and there are a number of regional and national resources available for those experiencing mental health-related distress, or those worried about a loved one who may need crisis support. One such resource is the the *988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline*. Individuals in need and their loved ones may call or text 988 or may chat at <https://988lifeline.org/>. Individuals may connect with a trained crisis counselor. It is confidential, free and available 24/7/365.

Other resources are available for those suffering mental health distress, a crisis or thoughts of suicide. *NJ Hopeline* provides specialists who are available for confidential telephone counseling and support 24 hours a day, seven days a week. *NJ Hopeline* may be reached by dialing 1-855-654-6735. The *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* is another valuable 24-hour, toll-free, confidential resource for anyone in emotional distress. By dialing 1-800-273-TALK (8255), individuals will be routed to the nearest crisis center in a national network of over 510 crisis centers. Day and night, callers can access crisis counseling and mental health referrals. For more suicide and mental health information or resources, call the Rockaway Township Division of Health at 973-983-2848.



Spring cheer at the Annual Easter Festival (clockwise from upper left): Lucas Hayes and Olivia Van Eeuwen were all smiles meeting the Easter Bunny; Recreation Director Dave Dyer is no spring chicken; Aaron Sackett assists Mayor Joe Jackson in selecting tickets/numbers for door prizes; Students from Morris Hills High School and Copeland Middle School help with a variety of spring-inspired crafts; Mayor Jackson shares holiday stories with the Easter Bunny; Diana Jacobo looks on as son Johnny meets Rocky, the Rockaway Township Police Department's mascot.



Update from the Engineering Department

Parks Lake Event Plaza

Construction is underway at the Parks Lake Memorial Area Improvements Project. The late Mayor Michael Dachisen conceived the idea for an event plaza adjacent to the existing memorial near the Gazebo at Parks Lake, and this was furthered by former Mayor Michael Puzio. The project will be completed under the leadership of Mayor Joe Jackson. This area will be improved with a nearly 2,000 square foot paver plaza, knee walls for seating, lighting and landscaping. A new flagpole will be installed and a monument will be dedicated to our veterans. The project is anticipated to take 60 days to complete and will hopefully be ready for Memorial Day, if not soon thereafter. Be on the lookout for further details related to the formal dedication of the monument to our veterans.

Scanning to Assess Township Pavement

The Township will be utilizing 360-degree camera imagery and 3D cameras to collect and analyze the pavement condition of the roadways within Rockaway Township. This technology, named StreetScan, is being used by many local and regional municipalities to efficiently evaluate and prioritize repairs to municipal infrastructure. The data is organized in a web-based GIS application, which allows the Township to visualize and manage road assets to better plan and execute maintenance activities. In the coming months, approximately 140-miles of roadway within Rockaway Township will be scanned by the vehicle shown below. Please contact the Department of Public Works with any questions regarding this project.



Improvements to Queens Road

Please be advised that the Rockaway Township Departments of Engineering and Public Works, including the Township Water Utility, are coordinating efforts to upgrade existing utilities beneath Queens Road. These upgrades would take place prior to roadway improvements. The Department of Engineering received a grant from the NJ Department of Transportation for work including curbing, curb ramps, drainage, milling and paving. The Water Utility will be completing infrastructure improvements to the existing water mains. A detour will be created to facilitate these improvements, so please expect delays. Your patience during these important upgrades to Township infrastructure is greatly appreciated.

Mind Your Sump Pump Discharge

Spring is here, bringing with it the presence of seasonal high groundwater tables. This can result in flooding and greater sump-pump use. Please be aware that it is against Township Ordinance to direct sump-pump discharge directly toward neighboring properties. Please also be sure not to discharge sump pump effluent into or near the street, particularly during the winter, to prevent icing conditions. If you have any questions regarding the permitted discharge from sump-pumps, please contact the Rockaway Township Department of Engineering.

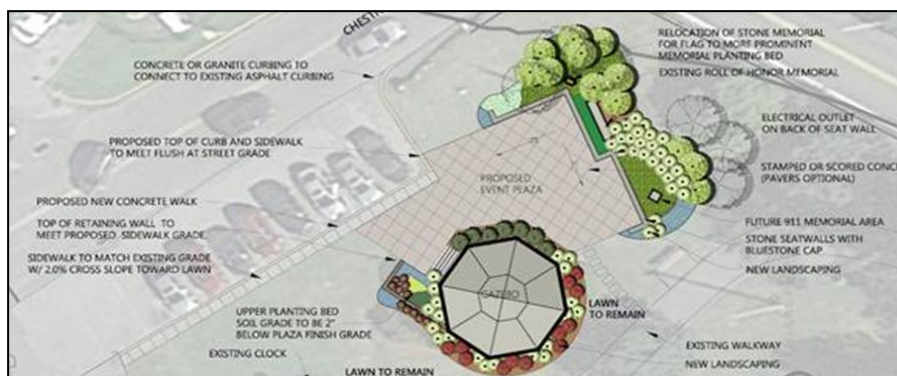
Please Note Small Fowl Regulations

A new retail store has opened in Rockaway Borough and is presently offering baby chickens and ducks for sale. At this time of year, these small fowl are sometimes given or gifted as pets. The Township wishes to remind Township residents that the keeping of chickens, ducks and other farm animals are only permitted in certain zoning districts and on properties greater than five acres. Before purchasing any chickens, ducks or other such farm animals, please contact the Rockaway Township Planning and Zoning Department to see if they are permitted on your property.

Senior Center Renovations

Renovations to the Senior Center basement will soon be underway. Similar to first floor renovations at this location, the Township received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from Morris County to defray the cost of this renovation. The project, a joint initiative between the Departments of Engineering, Community Services and Administration, is anticipated to begin during late spring and should take about 60 days to complete.

Pictured below is a drawing of the Parks Lake Event Plaza, the construction of which is currently underway. It is anticipated that work on the plaza will be completed by or shortly after Memorial Day. The plaza will include a monument, dedicated to Rockaway Township veterans.



Smoke Alarms Save Lives!

The Rockaway Township Fire Department and the National Fire Protection Association remind you that properly installed and maintained smoke alarms reduce fire deaths and injuries. If

there is a fire in your home, smoke alarms will help in providing you time to get out safely. Please review the following safety tips from the National Fire Protection Association.

Smoke Alarms at Home



SMOKE ALARMS ARE A KEY PART of a home fire escape plan. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so you can get outside quickly.

SAFETY TIPS

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom. They should also be outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. Install alarms in the basement.
- Large homes may need extra smoke alarms.
- It is best to use interconnected smoke alarms. When one smoke alarm sounds, they all sound.
- Test all smoke alarms at least once a month. Press the test button to be sure the alarm is working.
- Current alarms on the market employ different types of technology including multi-sensing, which could include smoke and carbon monoxide combined.
- Today's smoke alarms will be more technologically advanced to respond to a multitude of fire conditions, yet mitigate false alarms.
- A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from the stove.
- People who are hard-of-hearing or deaf can use special alarms. These alarms have strobe lights and bed shakers.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.

FACTS

- ❗ A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
- ❗ Smoke alarms should be installed inside every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level. Smoke alarms should be connected so when one sounds, they all sound. Most homes do not have this level of protection.
- ❗ Roughly 3 out of 5 fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.



NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION
The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards

**ROCKAWAY TOWNSHIP
FIRE DEPARTMENT**

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