

Get Out Now!

Preparing A Home Fire Escape Plan

You wake up in the middle of the night hearing the constant, loud beeping sound of your smoke detector. You can see smoke all around you. Do you know what to do?

Too often people panic in this situation because they do not know what to do. You and your family should make a fire escape plan to insure that everyone gets out of the house quickly and safely.

- ✓ **Draw a floor plan of your home or apartment.** Be sure to mark all the doors and windows.
- ✓ **Know two ways out of every room.** If one way is blocked by smoke or fire, you can use the second.
- ✓ **Plan a waiting place where everyone will meet.** Plan to call the fire department from a neighbor's house. Don't go back in the house!
- ✓ **If someone is trapped, let the fire department rescue them.**
- ✓ **Practice your exit plan until it becomes automatic.** Then practice again at least twice a year. Too often families make plans and then put them away in a drawer or filing cabinet. When a fire occurs, you will not have time to search for your plan.

When you are in your room and you hear a smoke alarm go off or someone yelling "fire" or "smoke," you only have a few minutes to get out of the house.

- ✓ **Get down on the floor and crawl low.** Both smoke and heat rise, so if you stay between 12 and 36 inches off the floor you will avoid the high heat and toxic fumes.
- ✓ **Check the door before opening.** Look for smoke coming in around the frame. Feel the door with the back of your hand. If you have a solid door, it will be hot to the touch if there is a fire on the other side.
- ✓ **Open doors slowly and carefully.** If a door is cool enough to open, you still need to be very cautious. There could still be fire on the other side. When you open the door, put your head down and tilt your face away from the opening. Open just a little, so it will be easy to close if you detect a fire.
- ✓ **Close doors behind you.** Remember that closed doors will slow the flow of oxygen to the fire and give you added time to escape.
- ✓ **Learn how to escape from windows.** If you are on the first story exit the window, feet first. Grab on to the ledge and hang down as far as you can and then jump. Do not attempt to exit a window any higher up except as a last resort.
- ✓ **Do not use an elevator.** If you live in a high-rise, locate the fire escape and use it. A fire can disable the elevator, you could be trapped.

Use the grid below to make your fire escape plan.

- ✓ **Start off by drawing the outside edges of your house then draw the inside walls, rooms, doors, etc.**
- ✓ **Once the house is drawn, mark an escape route so that every room has at least two ways to get out in the event of an emergency.**
- ✓ **Family members should become familiar with this plan and have a central meeting place outside of the home for the family to meet.**
- ✓ **Make sure that someone is assigned to help younger children and older family members.**
- ✓ **Practice the plan!!**

Here is a checklist to review after practicing your escape plan . . .

Did you remember to . . .

- ✓ Make a floor plan and know two ways out of every room?
- ✓ Respond quickly and calmly?
- ✓ Stay low and crawl?
- ✓ Feel the doors to see if they are hot?
- ✓ Open doors slowly and carefully?
- ✓ Close doors behind you?
- ✓ Exit windows by dropping feet first?
- ✓ Go immediately to a meeting place?