

Plan & Practice

Escaping from a Home Fire

In the event of a fire, it is important to make and practice an escape plan with your family. Smoke can be extremely dangerous and you may have less than 3 minutes to escape your home.

Prepare your home and family in case of a fire

- Make sure there is always an adult around to help young children and others who might have difficulty escaping.
- Make sure all windows and screens can be opened quickly.
 - Security bars should have a quick release device so you can open windows and doors in an emergency.
 - For upstairs windows, have an escape ladder that fits your windows. Make sure your children know that the escape ladder is for emergencies only and is not a toy.
- Practice feeling the door, doorknob, and cracks around the door with the back of your hand to see if it is too hot. Help your children practice this step.
- Teach children to “get low and go” if there is smoke when they are leaving the home.
- Choose a safe place to meet in front of your home where you can be seen from the street.
- Once out of the home, stay out.
- Wait to call 911 until after you are out of the home.

Apartment buildings require extra steps

- Know all of your building’s fire escape exits.
- Use the stairs to get out when there is a fire, never the elevator.
- If you don’t hear the building’s fire alarm, pull the nearest fire alarm “pull station” while leaving the floor.
- If you encounter heavy smoke or flames as you leave, find another exit or return to your apartment.

If you cannot safely escape your house or apartment

- Stuff the cracks around the door and air vents with duct tape, towels or clothing.
- Call 911 and tell them where you are located.
- Open the window and signal for help with a sheet or flashlight.

Other Important Tips

- Keep your child’s bedroom door closed. If a fire occurs in the hallway, a closed door will help keep smoke out of the room.
- Teach children not to hide from firefighters. Their uniforms can look scary, but remind your children that firefighters are there to help.
- Make sure your street number is clearly visible from the road.