

# Plan Your Escape!

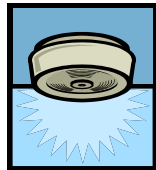


## Did You Know?

- The majority of fatal fires occur in the home and at night.
- The smell of smoke won't always awaken you.
- Fire produces toxic gases which can put you into a deeper sleep.
- Having working smoke detectors in your home cuts your chances of dying in a house fire by 50%.
- You and your family can survive a fire in your home if you know how to react quickly and correctly.

## Practice Makes Perfect!

A smoky fire in a home is scary for everyone—especially children. Smoke is thick and black. You can't see through smoke, as fire scenes on television and in the movies would have you believe. The sound of the smoke alarm in the middle of the night requires a quick and accurate response. You have about 2 minutes to escape safely!



Children regularly practice fire drills in school, yet very few serious fires ever happen there. So, why not plan and practice drills from your home? Would your children know two ways out of every room? Do they know how to open windows and screens, if necessary? Does everyone in the family know where to meet once you are safely outside? Would your children know how to shelter in a room if they could not escape? If you can't answer "yes" to all of these questions, it's time to plan and practice an escape from your home with your family!

## Before You Begin...



Make sure that you have working smoke detectors on every level of your home and in sleeping areas.

Test the batteries, and replace the batteries if they are more than a year old. Dust and clean existing smoke detectors.

Check all your windows and screens. Windows should open easily and not be painted shut. Screens should remove easily in case of an emergency.



Make sure external doors can be unlocked and opened without resistance.

Check all possible escape routes for possible clutter. This includes escape

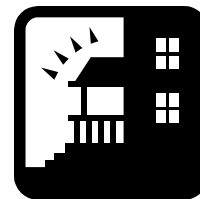
routes from basements and attics. A clear, unobstructed path should be available to any possible escape route,

whether it is a door or a window. Remember to keep any combustible items away from any heat sources, like a heater or pilot light.



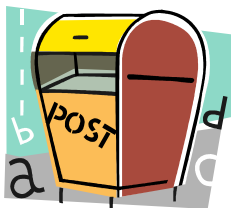
## Important Things to Remember...

- A family member should be designated to assist any infants or family members with special needs.
- Everyone in the family, including children, should practice unlocking and opening windows, screens and doors as part of the escape plan.
- Consider purchasing a UL approved collapsible ladder for escape from upper story windows. Know how to use it and practice!
- Be aware of porch or garage roofs, or shrubbery and trees, that may help with escape from upper floors.
- Teach children to sleep with their bedroom doors closed. This can delay the accumulation of smoke in their rooms.
- To make sure that the fire is not on the other side of the door, use the back of your hand to feel the closed door, the doorknob, and the crack between the door and the door frame. If it is cool, open the door carefully and proceed to your planned exit. Crawl low under smoke, if it is present. If the door is hot, don't open it and use your secondary route. Even if the door feels cool, open it carefully. If heat and smoke come in, slam the door and make sure that it is securely closed, then use another escape route.
- If there is no escape from the room, it may be necessary to "shelter". Stay low—near the floor. Block all spaces around the door and door frame with blankets, pillows, clothing, etc. to keep the smoke out. Signal at the window by waving, or use a cell phone to call 911 and advise them of your location.
- *Teach children not to hide from firefighters!*
- Escape first, then call 911. NEVER go back inside the home for any reason. Do not try to save property or pets. Getting out immediately is your ultimate goal.
- Designate an outdoor meeting place where all family members can gather. This way you will know if everyone has escaped.



## Once outside...

Gather at your meeting spot. It could be the corner mailbox or a neighbor's driveway. Call 911 from a cell phone, or send a family member to the neighbor's house to call 911. Inform the dispatch operator of the emergency and let him/her know if everyone has escaped. When firefighters arrive, immediately let them know whether everyone is out of the house.



## Make Your Plan and PRACTICE!

Graph paper works well for diagramming the floor plan of your home. Sit down with your family and discuss two ways out of each room. Don't forget to draw a garage and/or porch roof if you have them. Walk to each room to point out possible exits. Practice different scenarios. Set off the smoke alarm so children are familiar with the sound. PRACTICE your escape twice a year. (Visit [www.burnprevention.org](http://www.burnprevention.org) for an interactive escape planning experience).

