



THE GREAT ESCAPE!



Students regularly practice fire drills in school, yet how many plan and practice fire drills with their families from their homes? Consider these facts:

- 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 can survive a fire in your home if you know how to react quickly and correctly.

The other side of this paper contains a grid for you to draw a diagram of the rooms in your home. After you draw the rooms, plan at least two escape routes from each room. Don't forget to draw a garage and/or porch roof if you have them...they might serve as an escape route from upstairs windows. Sit down with your family and discuss your plan. Then, **PRACTICE** it at least twice a year. Plan an outdoor meeting place where you can count heads to be sure everyone made it out safely.

REMEMBER:

- A proper escape plan includes: working smoke detectors on every level of the home and in all sleeping areas; two ways out of each room; an unobstructed and easy-to-use meeting place outdoors; a posted emergency phone number for the fire department.
- If there are infants or family members with special needs, a designated member of the family should plan to assist them.
- Make sure that doors needed for escape can be opened easily and the windows are not nailed or painted shut. Everyone in the family, including children, should practice unlocking and opening windows and screens 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!
- 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 your escape route.
- If there is no escape from the room, 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.
- React immediately to the sound of a smoke alarm and make getting out your priority. Do not waste time trying to save property or pets.
- Escape first, then call 911. **NEVER** go back inside the home for any reason. When firefighters arrive, inform them of anyone or of pets that may still be inside. Firefighters are equipped and trained to perform rescues safely.
- Teach children not to hide from firefighters.



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Use the grid below to draw a diagram of the rooms in your home. Use symbols to designate windows, doors, stairs and smoke detectors. Draw red arrows on your diagram to show at least two escape routes from each room. Draw a designated outdoor meeting place. Discuss your plan with your family and **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE** it! As an option, you may choose to develop your plan using an interactive program at www.burnprevention.org.

