

THE GREAT ESCAPE

Why is it important to have and practice a home escape plan?

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

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PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Fire is scary for everyone, but especially for young children. Smoke is thick and black, and you can't see through it like TV shows would have you believe. When a smoke alarm goes off in the middle of the night, you must know what to do, and be able to react quickly. Fire can spread quickly through your home, leaving you as little as **TWO MINUTES** to escape safely once the alarm sounds.

Children regularly practice fire drills in school; yet very few serious fires ever happen there. So, why not plan and practice drills in 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 safely outside?
- Would your children know how to shelter in a room if they are not able to 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! Children as young as the age of three can follow a home escape plan!



Children as young as 3 can follow a home escape plan

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FIRST THINGS FIRST

Being able to get out in the event of a fire depends on two things: Advanced planning and advanced warning from **smoke alarms**. Make sure that you have working smoke alarms on every floor of your home and in every sleeping area. Test the batteries every month and change them once a year.



MAKE YOUR PLAN AND PRACTICE!

Sit down with your family and plan **two ways out of each room of your home**. Use the grid on the back page of this newsletter.

Draw each door and window, and don't forget to draw a porch or garage roof if you have them. While drawing your plan, walk to each room and point out the possible exits. Practice different scenarios. Plan two ways out of every room! Set off the smoke alarms so your children become familiar with the sound. Plan an outdoor meeting spot (like a tree or mailbox) a safe distance from the house where everyone should meet. **PRACTICE** at least twice a year, during the day **AND** at night!



ONCE OUTSIDE

Gather at your meeting spot. It could be the mailbox, a tree or a neighbor's driveway. Call 911 once outside from a cell phone or send a family member to a neighbor's house to call 911. Inform the dispatch operator of the emergency and let him know if everyone has escaped. When firefighters arrive, let them know immediately whether or not everyone has escaped.



According to a survey by the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) "only **ONE IN THREE** American households have actually developed and practiced a home fire escape plan."

According to the NFPA "Only 47% of those American families who **HAVE** an escape plan in case of a fire have actually **PRACTICED** it."

According to the NFPA "one-third of Americans who made an estimate thought they would have **SIX MINUTES** before a fire in their home would become life threatening. The time available is often less. Only 8% said their first thought upon hearing a smoke alarm would be to get out!"

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Designate a family member who will be responsible for infants and toddlers, older adults or other family members with special needs, who might require assistance during a fire.
- Everyone in the family, including children, should practice unlocking and opening doors, windows and screens as a part of the escape plan. (Make sure windows are not stuck or painted shut)
- Teach children how to escape on their own in case you can't help them.
- Be aware of porch or garage roofs, or shrubbery and trees, which might help with escape from upper floors.
- Teach children why it is important to **sleep with their doors closed**. (This can delay the accumulation of smoke in their rooms)
- To make sure fire is not on the other side of a 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's 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 exit. 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 never to hide from fire fighters!**
- **Escape first, then call 911.** NEVER go back inside your home for any reason.
- Designate an **outdoor meeting spot** where all family members can gather, and you will know whether or not everyone has escaped.



FIRE SAFETY FUN!

Use songs to teach young children what to do in the event of a fire!

Here's an example:

(To the tune of "Frère Jacques")

"There's a fire! There's a fire!

Must get out! Must get out!

Stay away from fire,
stay away from fire,

It is hot! It is hot!"





LET'S PLAN "THE GREAT ESCAPE"!

"When it comes to fire safety, practice makes perfect!" Use the grid below to draw a diagram of the rooms in your home. Use symbols to designate windows, doors, stairs and smoke alarms. 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!

