

Residential Emergency Escape Plan Information Sheet

Every year nearly 4,000 Americans die in home fires and more than 25,000 are injured. Children and the elderly are especially at risk in home fires, because they are less able to escape when fire strikes. Improve the chances that your family will survive a home fire – make sure they can escape quickly.

Steps to a safe escape

1. Have at least two working smoke alarms, test them monthly.
2. Plan two ways out of every room.
3. Practice your escape plan twice yearly.
4. Practice crawling low under smoke.
5. Have a pre-arranged meeting place outside your home.
6. Call the fire department from a neighbor's home.
7. Once outside, stay out.

Smoke alarms are life savers

The primary fire safety strategy for any home is to warn the occupants early. The best way to get the earliest warning of danger is by installing enough smoke alarms. Homes should have a smoke alarm near the bedrooms, but not so close to the kitchen that you have problems with alarms from cooking. **It's a good idea to have a smoke alarm in each bedroom, especially if you sleep with the door closed.**

Planning your escape

The other part of the fire safety plan is for everyone to get out quickly. When you are awakened in the middle of the night to a fire, your thinking may be confused, so it is important to practice your escape plan ahead of time. That way, your whole family will know what to do.

There should be **two ways out of each home using doors, and every bedroom must have an emergency escape window.** Make sure that everyone knows how to open the emergency windows so no time is wasted when fire strikes. These windows should be labeled with operating instructions. Everyone in the family, as well as frequent visitors and babysitters, should practice the escape plan, including opening the escape windows.

Can you beat the clock?

Most people do not realize how quickly fires can grow. **A home fire can become a killer in as little as three minutes.** Can your family get out this fast? Consider that it may take one minute for the smoke alarm to sound and for you to recognize the danger. If you have young children or you are elderly and move more slowly, you may need another minute to get ready. This leaves only one minute for everyone to get to an exit, open it and get out. By practicing your escape, you will make every second count.

Questions?

Contact the Fire Prevention Division
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