

Where There's Smoke...

Smoke Alarms Are Your First Line of Defense

Just one breath of super-heated smoke can knock you unconscious. Smoke alarms should be installed on each level of your home. When working properly they will alert you to developing fires and allow you time to evacuate. It's very important for older adults and persons with limited mobility to have smoke alarms installed inside their bedrooms. Also, smoke alarms with flashing strobe lights should be installed for the hearing impaired. Consult the manufacturer's instructions or your local fire department for proper placement of your alarms. And remember to test all detectors at least once a month, and replace batteries at least twice a year, or sooner, if necessary. After 10 years you should replace your smoke alarms with new ones.



Smoke inhalation
is responsible for
approximately
75%
of all fire-related
deaths.

...There's Fire.

Daily Safety Check

- ☐ At bedtime, make certain that all burners, ovens and portable heating devices are turned off, and that all cigarettes are completely extinguished.
- ☐ Check that stairs, hallways and doors are not obstructed.
- ☐ Keep flashlights, keys, eyeglasses, hearing aids, cell phones and walkers by your bedside so they are easily accessible.
- ☐ Keep a whistle or bell nearby to warn and alert others of danger.
- ☐ Make sure a telephone with emergency numbers is near the bed, but don't forget, you need to get out fast if there's a fire. It's usually better to get out first and then use a cell phone or a neighbor's phone to call for help.
- ☐ Remember to treat every fire alarm as if it's the real thing!

Be Prepared

Fire Evacuation for Senior Citizens and the Disabled



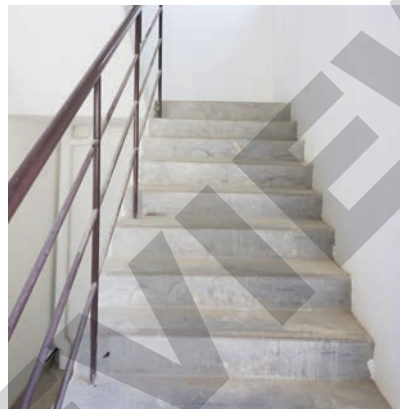
Are You Ready?

Plan Ahead

Everyone, young and old, is at risk when there is a fire, but persons over 65 and those with physical disabilities are in the greatest danger. Because fires are so unpredictable, knowing ahead of time what to do and where to go in a fire will save lives. Study your situation, consider any special arrangements you may want to make, plan and practice an evacuation drill frequently.

Persons who need extra time or assistance in exiting should sleep on the first floor with a door leading directly to the outside. Contact your local fire department and let them know that you or someone in your household may need extra assistance. The firefighters will help you pre-plan your escape routes and can suggest special fire safety equipment.

On a floorplan, mark two clear exits from each room. Make sure that everyone knows these escape routes and has practiced using them. Be sure that all doors and windows can be opened easily. Purchase escape ladders for rooms on the second and third floors, and store them near the windows. Also, designate a Safe Meeting Place outside and away from the building, where all members of your household will regroup after evacuating.



Apartments and High-Rises

If your building is more than two stories, get a copy of the fire plan and study it. Memorize where the closest stairwells and exits are (how many doors away in case you have to crawl in the dark or smoke), and make sure these routes are never obstructed. Remember never to use elevators during a fire. Once you're out, go straight to your Safe Meeting Place.



WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO...

...If You Hear the Fire Alarm?

Proceed with caution and stay calm—panic wastes valuable energy. Check all doors for heat before opening them. Feel the doorknob and around the sides and top of the door with the back of your hand. If the door is hot, do not open it—use an alternate route. If the door feels cool, open it slowly (you may need to slam it shut again if fire or smoke come rushing forward). If the next room or hallway is clear, proceed to your first exit. Remember, check all doors for heat, and close them after yourself to prevent the fire or smoke from spreading. Once outside, go to your Safe Meeting Place and stay there. Never go back inside a burning building for any reason. Remember, smoke rises, so crawl low to the floor, taking short breaths through the nose until you reach safety. If possible, hold a damp cloth over your nose and mouth as you crawl.

...If Your Clothes Catch Fire?

If you or your clothes should catch fire, **STOP** immediately, **DROP** gently to the floor and, covering your face with your hands, **ROLL** over and over to extinguish the flames. If you are unable to drop and roll, smother the flames with a blanket, rug, towel, or coat.

...If There is No Safe Way Out?

If your exits are blocked by smoke and you are more than two floors up, your best option may be to close yourself in your apartment and wait for the fire department's help. First, seal all air-ducts and the cracks around doors with damp cloths, duct tape, or even wet paper. Next, open a window at the top and bottom for ventilation, but do not open it wide because fresh oxygen will only fan a nearby fire. Then, telephone the fire department (even if the trucks have already arrived) and tell the dispatcher your location in the building. Lastly, signal firefighters by waving a white cloth out the window or a flashlight at night.

