

SMALL FIRES ARE BIG PROBLEMS

If a fire starts inside your home, apartment or condo you have less than a minute to try to put it out. Fire spreads very quickly and will be out of control faster than you can deal with it if you're not prepared.

The number one hot spot for any home is in the kitchen, where stove and grease fires can flare up and spread in seconds. **The safest way to deal with a pan fire is to smother it with a large lid and then turn off the burner.**

However, fires can start anywhere. Cigarettes and other smoking materials are the leading cause of fires in the home. Over 2000 deaths in the U.S. every year are caused by carelessly discarded cigarettes. If dropped on a bed or couch, cigarettes can smolder for up to three hours before igniting the fabric. Thirty seconds later the couch will be fully involved and you're too late to put it out. So **make sure all smoking materials are fully extinguished in deep ashtrays** before leaving your home or going to bed.

Remember, outlets, cords and electrical appliances are all potential fire hazards. **Check for frayed or broken wires, and don't overload outlets!**

know your extinguishers...

You should keep fire extinguishers close by in each area of your home or apartment, but never close to heat sources like the stove or oven. Keep them on the wall near exits, fully charged at all times, and no more than five feet off the ground. Most importantly, learn and practice their proper use.

...they're NOT all the same

Water-filled extinguishers should be used only if the combustible items are ordinary solids like paper, cloth or wood.

It is extremely dangerous to spray water on oil, gas or grease fires because water will only spread the burning substance.

Carbon dioxide and dry chemical extinguishers are much more versatile. They are safe for both grease and electrical fires.

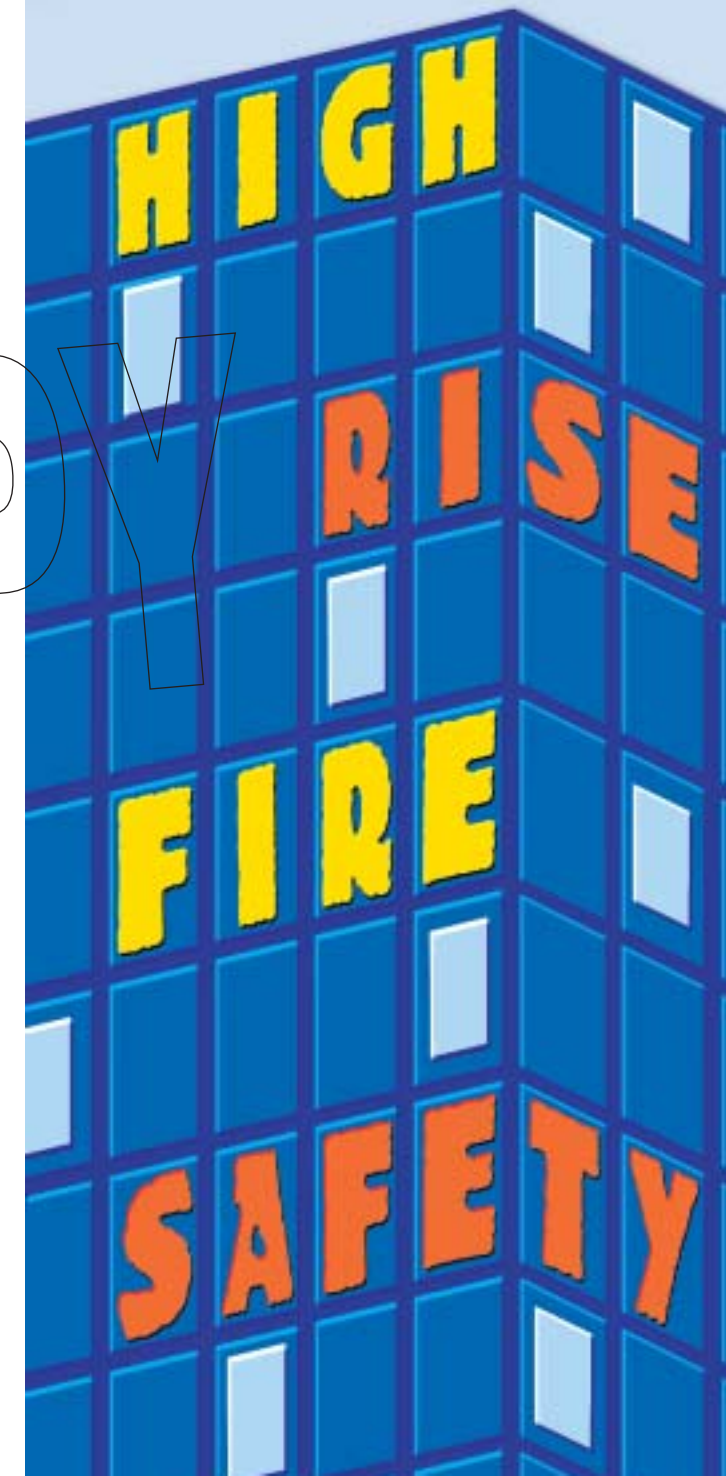
They will starve a fire of its oxygen and thereby put it out. Again, follow the directions for proper use, or consult your local fire personnel.

CLOSE THE DOOR ON SMOKE

In 1981, a fire destroyed the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. Fire was responsible for millions of dollars in damage, and 84 hotel residents died. The 84 deaths, however, were not caused by fire, but by smoke inhalation, and many of these people were as much as twenty stories away from the actual fire. Open doors will allow poisonous smoke to circulate quickly throughout a building and will also feed more air to a hungry fire.

So remember... when there's a fire in your building, **close all doors behind you!** Whether you're on your way out, or sealing yourself inside your apartment, closing doors can be the difference between life and death.

Because millions of us don't live on the first or second floor...



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STAY OUT OF TROUBLE

Most of us know someone—a friend or loved one (maybe ourselves)—who lives high off the ground in a multi-storied condominium or apartment building. While it is possible in some situations to safely escape a fire through a second-story window, what do we do if we live on the third, fourth or twentieth floor of our building?

The first step is easy—the same step for all of us no matter what kind of building we live in.

STUDY THE SITUATION—and **PLAN AHEAD!** But how?

PREVENTION

Staying alive starts with not getting in trouble in the first place. So keep a fire-safe home. Guard these guidelines with your life:

- Keep matches and lighters away from children at all times.
- Make sure all cigarettes or other smoking materials are completely extinguished in large deep ashtrays.
- Inspect and replace all worn, frayed or broken electrical cords.
- Recycle old newspapers, magazines and other combustibles, and store them neatly and away from heat sources.
- Make sure all flammable liquids are stored properly and far away from heat sources.
- Keep hallways, exits and stairs unobstructed and free of clutter.
- Immediately report broken emergency lights, alarms or sprinkler-fixtures to your building managers.

HAVE A PLAN

- Make sure you have smoke detectors on every level of your home and check them frequently. Also, install detectors in bedrooms of people who may need extra time or assistance.
- Study your building's evacuation plan. Memorize your routes to all stairwells and exits, count the number of doorways in between and practice speedy evacuation frequently with your whole family.
- Keep fire extinguishers in your home and learn their proper use. Keep them stored safely away from heat sources and near convenient exits.
- Make sure the building managers post evacuation procedures in common areas such as the lobby.

GETTING OUT

The electrical controls in elevators will likely be damaged by a fire, so **STAY OFF**, and head for the nearest stairwell. First check the stairwell for heat and smoke before going down. Feel the doorknob, cracks and surface of the door with the back of your hand. Then, look for smoke coming through the hinges around the door. If any heat or smoke is detected, turn around and head for your next closest stairwell. Again, check for heat and smoke, and proceed only if stairwell is heat and smoke free. If all stairwells are filled with smoke, your best action may be to return to your apartment and wait for the fire department's help.

WAITING FOR HELP

First, seal the cracks around the door with damp cloths to keep out the smoke. Then call the fire department, even if they are already at the scene, and tell the dispatcher your exact location in the building. Next, close all other doors inside your apartment. If you have a balcony, go out onto it and close the door behind you. Signal to the fire personnel below with a white or bright cloth, or with a flashlight if it's nighttime. If you have only a window, open it a little at top and bottom to circulate fresh air into the room and breathe the air coming in the bottom. Again, signal your rescuers with a bright cloth, or a flashlight if it is dark.

KEEP PERSONAL ESSENTIALS SUCH AS EYE-GLASSES, HEARING-AIDS, WALKERS AND CANES BY YOUR BEDSIDE, AS WELL AS A TELEPHONE AND EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS.

DON'T PANIC! PANIC USES UP NEEDED ENERGY AND CAUSES CONFUSION. MEMORIZE YOUR ESCAPE ROUTES.

COOPERATE WITH THE OTHER RESIDENTS OF YOUR BUILDING. IF YOU NEED EXTRA ASSISTANCE, USE A BUDDY SYSTEM.