

HOME FIRE SAFETY: BE SAFE AND SOUND



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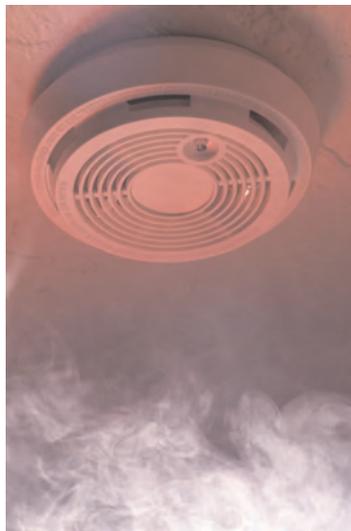


www.firesafetyliteracyproject.org

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WHAT EVERY FAMILY NEEDS TO KNOW

No one wants to think about having a fire at home. But thinking about it and being ready for it can and does save lives. Having working smoke alarms in your home gives you early warning if there is a fire. Planning and practicing a fire drill can prepare you to get out safely. Firefighters know this. They will tell you that most fire deaths and injuries happen in homes. They see this every day.





BEING READY IS THE KEY TO SURVIVING A HOME FIRE

Be ready. There are three things you can do to protect your family. They are simple, but they are very important. Do them now, *before* fire strikes:

1. Install smoke alarms on all levels.
2. Test them each month to make sure they are working.
3. Plan and practice home fire drills.

Smoke is your enemy. Smoke is sneaky. It is silent, and it has poison gases in it. Smoke gets very hot, very fast.

Smoke alarms save lives. It doesn't matter if your home is big or small, or new or old. All homes need smoke alarms that work. Put them near every bedroom. If your home has more than one level, put smoke alarms on every level.

Your home needs smoke alarms. They will wake you up and give you time to get out safely if there is a fire. You can't hear smoke. You can't smell it when you sleep. Smoke alarms make a very loud sound when smoke gets near them. The sound is loud enough to wake most people.

Every home needs to have smoke alarms that are always working. Smoke alarms give you time to get out safely if there is a fire.

Plan and practice your escape. When a fire starts, it can grow and spread very fast. The people inside have only a few short minutes to get to safety. There is no time to stop for anything — not for valuables or pets. The most important thing is for you and your family to get to safety.



Make a fire escape plan for your home. Draw it on paper. Talk with your family about the best ways to get outside quickly. Choose a meeting place that is outside and in front of your home. Everyone should go to this place if there is a fire.

Practice fire drills with your family. Then everyone will know how to get out if there is a fire. When you draw your plan make sure each person in your family:

- Knows two ways to get out of every room
- Can open all doors and windows easily
- Knows where to meet outside

If you live in an apartment building, know all of the ways to get out fast. If it is a large building, know the sound of the fire alarm. You should also know the plan for getting everyone out of your building. Ask your fire department to hold a fire drill to help people practice the escape plan for your building.



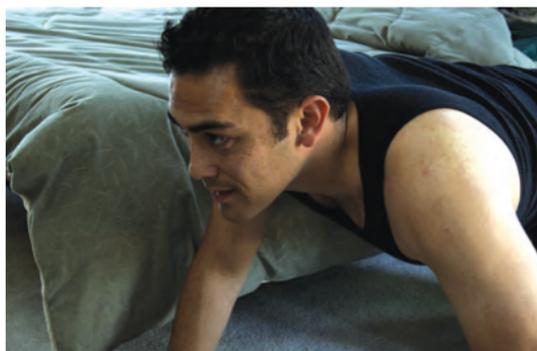


Walk through your plan together. Make sure your smoke alarms have fresh batteries. Push the “test button” so everyone knows the alarm sound. Tell your children what they should do if the alarm goes off. Make sure windows and doors open easily. Always keep the way clear so you can escape quickly in an emergency. Put emergency numbers on telephones. Make sure your house or building number is large so firefighters can see it from the street. This will help them find your home quickly.



Have family fire drills. Have at least two family fire drills every year. Practice your escape during the day and the night. Start the drill by pushing the “test button” on one of your smoke alarms.

Get out fast and go directly to your meeting place. You need more than one way out. If fire or smoke is in your way, you should use your other exit, maybe a window. Practice what to do if there is smoke: “Get low and go”. Crouch or crawl below the smoke and go to your exit. Take a cell phone or cordless phone outside with you.





Some children may not wake up when the smoke alarm sounds.

Children sleep very deeply. Adults must make sure children know the sound of the smoke alarm and can wake up to it. You can find out who can hear the smoke alarm if you have a fire drill when everyone else is sleeping. Younger children will need your help to escape a fire. If others in your home do not wake to the smoke alarm or need help getting out, plan for an adult to help them escape.

Home fire sprinklers save lives.

If you are moving into an apartment, choose a building with fire sprinklers. If you are building or remodeling your home, have fire sprinklers installed in it if you can. Sprinklers put water on the flames when the fire starts. They will put the fire out or keep it small until firefighters arrive. This gives you more time to escape and protects your property.



PREVENTING HOME FIRES

Be very careful with things that burn and get hot.

The best way to be safe from fire is to stop it from happening. Nearly all fires in the home can be prevented. When people learn what causes fires and how to prevent them, they can make their homes much safer. The most common fires happen when people make mistakes using appliances and things that burn. Here are a few of the ways you can prevent fire in your home:

Always stay in the kitchen when food is cooking. Watch the food carefully. If you must walk away for a moment, turn the heat down and return to the stove quickly.



Make sure there are at least three feet of space between a space heater and anything that can burn. Turn off space heaters before you sleep or leave the area.



Empty ashtrays often. Run water over them before you empty them into the trash. Look around and under cushions and pillows for cigarettes that may have fallen. Dropped cigarettes could start a fire.



Only adults should burn candles. Blow out the candles if you leave the room or go to sleep. Use holders that can't burn and won't fall over. Place candles where children and pets can't reach them. Place them away from things that can catch fire. Do not let children have candles in their rooms.



It is too dangerous to leave matches or lighters where young children can get them. Keep them locked away. Don't leave them in purses or in the pockets of your clothes.



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Make sure you do these things:

- Have smoke alarms on each level of your home.
- Test them so you know they are working.
- Put fresh batteries in at least once a year.
- Plan how to get out.
- Walk through your plan.
- Practice your plan with a family fire drill.
- Set a date for your next family fire drill.
- Take steps to prevent fires from starting.



This brochure tells you some of the ways you can make your home safer from a fire. There is much more you can learn. If you use the Internet, you can read and print free home safety checklists and step-by-step guides from the **Home Safety Council** at www.homesafetycouncil.org.

There are lots of fun safety games for children on the **Code Red Rover** Web site: www.coderedrover.org.

Visit your local fire department to learn even more.