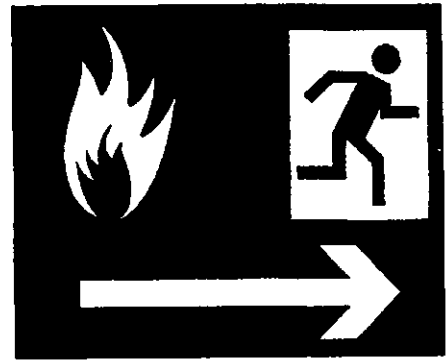




## LEARN FIRE ESCAPE PLANS

A reprint from the FEMA U.S. Fire Administration website



In the event of a fire remember that **every second counts**, so you and your family must always be prepared. Escape plans help you get out of your home quickly. In less than 30 seconds, a small flame can get completely out of control and turn into a major fire. It only takes minutes for a house to fill with thick black smoke and become engulfed in flames.

**Prepare and practice your fire escape plan twice a year with everyone in your household, including children and people with disabilities.** It's also a good idea to practice your plan with overnight guests. Some tips to consider when preparing your escape plan include:

- Draw a map of each level of your home and show the location of all doors and windows. Find two ways to get out of each room. Make sure all doors and windows that lead outside open easily.
- Only purchase collapsible escape ladders evaluated by a recognized testing laboratory. Use the ladder only in a real emergency.
- Teach children how to escape on their own in case you cannot help them.
- Have a plan for everyone in your home who has a disability.
- Practice your fire escape plan at night and during the daytime.

### SECURITY BARS REQUIRE SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

Security bars may help to keep your family safe from intruders, but they can also trap you inside in the event of a deadly fire! Windows and doors with **security bars must have quick release devices** to allow them to be opened immediately in an emergency. Make sure everyone in the family understands and practices how to properly operate and open locked or barred doors and windows.

### IMMEDIATELY LEAVE THE HOME

**When a fire occurs, get out fast: you may only have seconds to escape safely.** Take the safest exit route, but if you must escape through smoke, remember to crawl low, under the smoke and keep your mouth covered. The smoke contains toxic gases which can disorient you, or, at worst, overcome you.

### NEVER OPEN DOORS THAT ARE HOT TO THE TOUCH

When you come to a closed door, feel the doorknob and door to make sure that fire is not on the other side. If either is hot, leave the door closed and use your secondary escape route. If the door feels cool, open it slowly. Be ready to shut it quickly if heavy smoke or fire is present.

If you can't get out, close the door and cover vents and cracks around doors to keep the smoke out. Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number. Say where you are and signal for help at the window with a light-colored cloth or a flashlight.

### DESIGNATE A MEETING PLACE OUTSIDE AND TAKE ATTENDANCE

Designate a meeting location a safe distance in front of your home. For example, meet under a specific tree or at the end of the driveway or front sidewalk to make sure everyone has gotten out safely so no one will be hurt looking for someone who is already safe. **Make sure everyone in your home knows how to call 9-1-1** or your local emergency number and that your house number can be seen day or night from the street.

### ONCE OUT, STAY OUT

Remember to escape first and then notify the fire department using the 9-1-1 system or proper local emergency number in your area. **Never go back into a burning building for any reason.** Teach children not to hide from firefighters. If someone is missing, or pets are trapped inside your home, tell the firefighters right away. They are equipped to perform rescues safely.

### HOW FIRE-SAFE IS YOUR HOME?

**You won't know until you do a fire safety walkthrough.** Conduct a fire safety walkthrough of your home on a regular basis. Use the following tips to help you in your walkthrough:

- Keep clothes, blankets, curtains, towels, and other items that can easily catch on fire at least three feet from space heaters and away from stove burners.
- Place space heaters where they will not tip over easily.
- Have chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a professional.
- Always use a metal mesh screen with fireplaces and leave glass doors open while burning a fire.
- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Be sure your stove and small appliances are off before going to bed.
- Check for worn wires and do not run cords under rugs or furniture.
- Never overload electrical sockets.
- Keep lighters and matches out of the reach of children.
- Never leave cigarettes unattended and never smoke in bed.
- Make sure cigarettes and ashes are out. The cigarette needs to be completely stubbed out in the ashtray or run under water.