

FIRE SAFETY TIPS

FOR

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Provided by the San Francisco Fire Department

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Fire Extinguishers

A portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until the fire department arrives; but portable extinguishers have limitations. Because fire grows and spreads so rapidly, the number one priority for residents is to get out safely.

Safety tips

- Use a portable fire extinguisher when the fire is confined to a small area, such as a wastebasket, and is not growing; everyone has exited the building; the fire department has been called or is being called; and the room is not filled with smoke.
 - To operate a fire extinguisher, remember the word **PASS**:
 - **P**ull the pin. Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you, and release the locking mechanism.
 - **A**im low. Point the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
 - **S**queeze the lever slowly and evenly.
 - **S**weep the nozzle from side-to-side.
- For the home, select a multi-purpose extinguisher (can be used on all types of home fires) that is large enough to put out a small fire, but not so heavy as to be difficult to handle.
- Choose a fire extinguisher that carries the label of an independent testing laboratory.
- Read the instructions that come with the fire extinguisher and become familiar with its parts and operation before a fire breaks out. Local fire departments or fire equipment distributors often offer hands-on fire extinguisher trainings.
- Install fire extinguishers close to an exit and keep your back to a clear exit when you use the device so you can make an easy escape if the fire cannot be controlled. If the room fills with smoke, leave immediately.
- Know when to go. Fire extinguishers are one element of a fire response plan, but the primary element is safe escape. Every household should have a [home fire escape plan](#) and working smoke alarms.

Safety Messages about Smoke Alarms

Safety tips

A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat and fire. Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area. Install alarms on every level of the home. Install alarms in the basement. Smoke alarms should be interconnected. When one sounds, they all sound.

Large homes may need extra smoke alarms.

It is best to use interconnected smoke alarms. When one smoke alarm sounds they all sound.

Test all smoke alarms at least once a month. Press the test button to be sure the alarm is working.

There are two kinds of alarms. Ionization smoke alarms are quicker to warn about flaming fires. Photoelectric alarms are quicker to warn about smoldering fires. It is best to use of both types of alarms in the home.

A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from the stove.

People who are [hard-of-hearing or deaf](#) can use special alarms. These alarms have strobe lights and bed shakers.

Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.

Smoke alarms are an important part of a [home fire escape plan](#).

Plan Your Escape

Your ability to get out of your house during a fire depends on advance warning from smoke alarms and advance planning.

Fire can spread rapidly through your home, leaving you as little as one or two minutes to escape safely once the alarm sounds. A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat and fire. Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area.

Install alarms on every level of the home. Smoke alarms should be interconnected. When one sounds, they all sound.

Pull together everyone in your household and make a plan. Walk through your home and inspect all possible exits and escape routes. Households with children should consider drawing a floor plan of your home, marking two ways out of each room, including windows and doors. Also, mark the location of each smoke alarm. For easy planning, download NFPA's [escape planning grid](#). This is a great way to get children involved in fire safety in a non-threatening way.

Get everyone in your household together and make a [home escape plan](#). Walk through your home and look for two ways out of every room.

Make sure escape routes are clear of debris and doors and windows open easily. Windows with security bars or grills should have an emergency release device.

Plan an outside meeting place where everyone will meet once they have escaped. A good meeting place is something permanent, like a tree, light pole, or mailbox a safe distance in front of the home.

If there are infants, older adults, family members with mobility limitations or children who do not wake to the sound of the smoke alarm, make sure that someone is assigned to assist them in the event of an emergency.

If the smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside. Respond quickly – get up and go, remember to know two ways out of every room, get yourself outside quickly, and go to your outside meeting place with your family.

[Learn more about home escape planning](#).

Emergency Preparedness

In a disaster, local officials and relief workers cannot reach everyone immediately. Help may not arrive for hours or days. You and your family -- and don't forget to include the [needs of those with disabilities](#) -- need to be prepared ahead of time because you won't have time to shop or search for the supplies you will need when a disaster strikes.

Most disasters are [natural disasters](#), the result of some force of nature, such as tornadoes, hurricanes, and floods. Some natural disasters can be predicted, such as hurricanes and severe winter storms, while others, such as tornadoes and earthquakes, happen with little or no warning.

Some disasters are the cause of human actions, intentional or unintentional. A disaster plan will help with safety, security, and comfort.

Regardless of the type of disaster, there are things you can do to prepare. Contact your local [American Red Cross chapter](#), visit the [FEMA Website](#), or [Ready.gov](#) to make sure you are aware of the potential for natural disasters in your community. After you have identified the types of disasters that could strike where you live, create a family disaster plan that can apply to any type of disaster – natural, unintentional, or intentional.

Prepare an emergency supplies kit

Disaster can occur suddenly and without warning. They can be frightening for adults, but they are traumatic for children if they don't know what to do when these events occur. Children depend on daily routines. When an emergency disturbs their routine, children can become nervous. In an emergency, they'll look to parents or other adults to help.

How parents react to an emergency gives children an indication on how to act. They see their parents' fear as proof that the danger is real. A parent's response during this time may have a long-term impact. Including children in the family's recovery plans will help them feel that their life will return to normal.

Families should prepare an [emergency supplies kit \(PDF\)](#) and develop a plan. Practice your plan so that everyone will remember what to do in an emergency. Everyone in the home, including children, should play a part in the family's response and recovery efforts. Remember: make the plan simple so everyone can remember the details.

More information on this topic

[Sparky the Fire Dog®](#) teaches kids about what needs to be included in an emergency supplies kit.

[American Red Cross](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)

[Ready.gov](#)

Propane Safety

The leading equipment involving in LP-gas home structure fires was a grill, hibachi, or barbecue.

Facts & figures

U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 1,170 home structure fires involving LP-gas in 2003-2007. These fires resulted in 34 civilian deaths, 135 civilian injuries and \$48 million in direct property damage.

Spark, ember or flame from operating equipment was the leading heat source for LP-gas home structure fires.

- Handle any propane-powered equipment cautiously and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Cylinder tanks for equipment such as stoves and ovens must be located outside of the home.
- Never store or use propane gas cylinders larger than one pound inside the home.
- Never operate a propane-powered gas grill inside the home.
- Have propane gas equipment inspected periodically by a professional for possible leaks or malfunctioning parts.
- Carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions when lighting a pilot.
- If you smell a strong odor of gas, leave the area immediately and call the fire department from outside the home.

Dryers and Washing Machines

Safety tips

- Have your dryer installed and serviced by a professional.
- Do not use the dryer without a lint filter.
- Make sure you clean the lint filter before or after each load of laundry. Remove lint that has collected around the drum.

Extension Cord Safety

- Don't attempt to plug extension cords into one another.
- Make sure extension cords are properly rated for their intended use, indoor or outdoor, and meet or exceed the power needs of the device being used.
- Keep all outdoor extension cords clear of snow and standing water.
- Do NOT overload extension cords.
- A heavy reliance on extension cords is an indication that you have too few outlets to address your needs. Have additional outlets installed where you need them.
- Inspect cords for damage before use. Check for cracked or frayed sockets, loose or bare wires, and loose connections.
- Do NOT nail or staple extension cords to walls or baseboards.
- Do NOT run extension cords through walls, doorways, ceilings, or floors. If a cord is covered, heat cannot escape, which may result in a fire hazard.
- Never use three-prong plugs with outlets that only have two slots. Never cut off the ground pin to force a fit, which could lead to electric shock.
- Buy only cords that have been approved by an independent testing laboratory
- Do NOT substitute extension cords for permanent wiring
- Do NOT use an extension cord or power strip with heaters or fans, which could cause cords to overheat and result in a fire.

Portable Generators

Portable generators are useful during power outages. However, many homeowners are unaware that the improper use of portable generators can be risky. The most common dangers associated with portable generators are carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, electrical shock or electrocution, and fire hazards.

Generators should be operated in well-ventilated locations outdoors away from all doors, windows and vent openings.

Never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open.

Place generators so that exhaust fumes can't enter the home through windows, doors or other openings in the building.

Make sure to install [carbon monoxide](#) (CO) alarms in your home. Follow manufacturer's instructions for correct placement and mounting height.

Turn off generators and let them cool down before refueling. Never refuel a generator while it is running.

Store fuel for the generator in a container that is intended for the purpose and is correctly labeled as such. Store the containers outside of living areas.

THE FOLLOWING ARE NFPA SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

The San Francisco Fire Department, in collaboration with the Department of Building Inspections, has a Fire Prevention and Education team that promotes Fire Safety through Community Outreach and Education. Upon request, this team will come to an organization or group to give a presentation on how to keep their specific building, whether it is a living space or workspace, safe. You can contact this team by emailing a request to firepio@sfgov.org or by calling 415-558-3300.

The San Francisco Fire Department strongly encourages any member of the public who is aware of a hazardous or unsafe building condition or use to contact the San Francisco Fire Department by visiting our website at: www.sf-fire.org, or by calling either 415-558-3300 or 3-1-1 (in San Francisco). Immediate life safety concerns should be reported directly via 9-1-1.

Candle Safety

Candles may be pretty to look at but they are a cause of home fires — and home fire deaths. Remember, a candle is an open flame, which means that it can easily ignite anything that can burn.

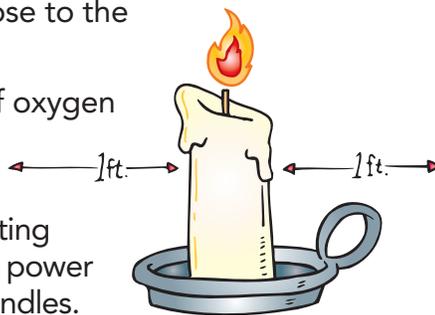
"CANDLE WITH CARE"

- » Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Avoid the use of candles in the bedroom and other areas where people may fall asleep.
- » Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.

Think about using flameless candles in your home. They look and smell like real candles.

IF YOU DO BURN CANDLES, make sure that you...

- » Use candle holders that are sturdy, and won't tip over easily.
- » Put candle holders on a sturdy, uncluttered surface.
- » Light candles carefully. Keep your hair and any loose clothing away from the flame.
- » Don't burn a candle all the way down — put it out before it gets too close to the holder or container.
- » Never use a candle if oxygen is used in the home.
- » Have flashlights and battery-powered lighting ready to use during a power outage. Never use candles.



Candles and Kids

Never leave a child alone in a room with a burning candle. Keep matches and lighters up high and out of children's reach, in a locked cabinet.



FACTS

- ! **December** is the peak time of year for home candle fires.
- ! Roughly **one-third** of home candle fires start in the bedroom.
- ! More than half of all candle fires start when things that can burn are too close to the candle.



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Carbon Monoxide Safety



Often called the invisible killer, carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel can be sources of carbon monoxide.

- » CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes or standards. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- » Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- » Choose a CO alarm that is listed by a qualified testing laboratory.
- » Call your local fire department's non-emergency number to find out what number to call if the CO alarm sounds.
- » Test CO alarms at least once a month; replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- » If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, call the fire department.
- » If the CO alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for. Call for help from a fresh air location and stay there until emergency personnel.
- » If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not covered with snow.
- » During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.
- » A generator should be used in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors and vent openings.
- » Gas or charcoal grills can produce CO — only use outside.

HOME HEATING EQUIPMENT



Have fuel-burning heating equipment and chimneys inspected by a professional every year before cold weather sets in. When using a fireplace, open the flue for adequate ventilation. Never use your oven to heat your home.

FACTS

- ! A person can be poisoned by a small amount of CO over a longer period of time or by a large amount of CO over a shorter amount of time.
- ! In 2010, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 80,100 non-fire CO incidents in which carbon monoxide was found, or an average of nine calls per hour.



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CFL Light Bulb Safety

Energy-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL) are becoming more common in homes and at work. In addition to using less electricity, they also have a positive impact on the global climate. Here are some important safety tips you should know about CFLs.



PURCHASE CFL LIGHT BULBS that have the listing label of a recognized testing laboratory. Light bulbs labeled by a recognized testing lab will ensure that the bulb meets the latest product safety standards.

When a CFL Burns Out

- »» When a CFL bulb burns out it may smoke and the plastic base may blacken. This is normal and is not a fire safety issue.
- »» CFLs should never be discarded with household trash. The Environmental Protection Agency recommends that consumers use local recycling options for CFLs. Contact your local government or visit epa.gov/cfl/cflrecycling to identify local recycling options.

If a CFL Breaks

CFLs are made of glass and can break. Be careful when removing from packaging and installing or removing from a socket. If a CFL breaks:

- OPEN a window to allow the room to air out for 5–10 minutes.
- People and pets should LEAVE the room.
- TURN OFF forced air heating and/or air conditioning.
- COLLECT broken glass and visible powder using stiff cardboard, tape or a damp paper towel.
- PLACE the debris in a glass jar or a plastic bag in a safe location outside until you can dispose of it.
- CONTACT your local government to find out how to dispose of the debris
- CONTINUE airing out the room for several hours.

NOTE

Consider checking the Consumer Product Safety Commission (cpsc.gov) for recalls of CFLs that may present a fire danger.

FACT

CFL bulbs contain a small trace of **mercury** within the glass. When broken, mercury will immediately dissipate into the air. Concentrations of mercury will likely approach zero in an hour or so.



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Clothes Dryer Safety

Doing laundry is most likely part of your every day routine. But did you know how important taking care of your clothes dryer is to the safety of your home? With a few simple safety tips you can help prevent a clothes dryer fire.

- »» Have your dryer installed and serviced by a professional.
- »» Do not use the dryer without a lint filter.
- »» Make sure you clean the lint filter before or after each load of laundry. Remove lint that has collected around the drum.
- »» Rigid or flexible metal venting material should be used to sustain proper air flow and drying time.
- »» Make sure the air exhaust vent pipe is not restricted and the outdoor vent flap will open when the dryer is operating. Once a year, or more often if you notice that it is taking longer than normal for your clothes to dry, clean lint out of the vent pipe or have a dryer lint removal service do it for you.
- »» Keep dryers in good working order. Gas dryers should be inspected by a qualified professional to make sure that the gas line and connection are intact and free of leaks.
- »» Make sure the right plug and outlet are used and that the machine is connected properly.
- »» Follow the manufacturer's operating instructions and don't overload your dryer.
- »» Turn the dryer off if you leave home or when you go to bed.

AND DON'T FORGET...

Dryers should be properly **grounded**.

Check the **outdoor vent** flap to make sure it is not covered by snow.

Keep the area around your dryer **clear** of things that can burn, like boxes, cleaning supplies and clothing, etc.

Clothes that have come in contact with **flammable substances**, like gasoline, paint thinner, or similar solvents should be laid outside to dry, then can be washed and dried as usual.

FACT

- ❗ The leading cause of home clothes dryer fires is failure to clean them.



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Cooking Safety

Cooking brings family and friends together, provides an outlet for creativity and can be relaxing. But did you know that cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home injuries? By following a few safety tips you can prevent these fires.

“COOK WITH CAUTION”

- » Be on alert! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol don't use the stove or stovetop.
- » Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- » If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- » Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.

If you have a small (grease) cooking fire and decide to fight the fire...

- » On the stovetop, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
- » For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.

If you have any doubt about fighting a small fire...

- » Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
- » Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number from outside the home.



Cooking and Kids

Have a “kid-free zone” of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.

FACTS

- ! The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.
- ! Most cooking fires in the home involve the kitchen stove.



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Home Safety for People with Disabilities

There's no place like home. It is a place to relax, share laughs with family, and enjoy home cooked meals. But did you know that the majority of fire deaths occur in the home? Help everyone in the home stay safe from fire.



Home Fire Sprinklers

Home fire sprinklers protect lives by keeping fires small. Sprinklers allows people more time to escape in a fire. When choosing an apartment or home, look for one that has home fire sprinklers.

Smoke Alarms

- » Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room. They should also be outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home.
- » Test your smoke alarm at least once a month by pushing the test button. If you can't reach the alarm, ask for help.
- » For added safety, interconnect the smoke alarms. If one sounds, they all sound. This gives more time to escape.
- » Smoke alarms with sealed (long-life) batteries work for up to 10 years. They can be helpful for people who find it hard to change batteries.
- » Smoke alarms expire. Replace them every 10 years.

People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- » Smoke alarms and alert devices are available for people who are deaf or hard or hearing.
- » Strobe lights flash when the smoke alarm sounds. The lights warn people of a possible fire.
- » When people who are deaf are asleep, a pillow or bed shaker can wake them so they can escape.
- » When people who are hard of hearing are asleep, a loud, mixed, low-pitched sound alert device can wake them. A pillow or bed shaker may be helpful. These devices are triggered by the sound of the smoke alarm.



Escape Planning

Include everyone in home escape planning. Each person should have input about the best ways to escape. Home fire drills are important. Everyone in the home must participate in them. Keep a phone by your bed in case you can't escape and need to call for help.

Talk with someone from the fire department about your escape plan. Ask them **review your plan**. Ask if your fire department keeps a directory of people who may need extra help. If you have a **service animal**, agree on a plan to keep the animal with you during an emergency.



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Electric Portable Space Heater Safety

When the weather turns cold, it can bring a chill into our homes. Portable space heaters have become a popular way to supplement central heating or heat one room. If you plan to use portable electric space heaters, make sure to follow these tips and recommendations:

HEATER CHECKLIST

- » Purchase a heater that is listed by a qualified testing laboratory.
- » Keep the heater at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn, including people.
- » Choose a heater with a thermostat and overheat protection.
- » Place the heater on a solid, flat surface.
- » Make sure your heater has an auto shut-off to turn the heater off if it tips over.
- » Keep space heaters out of the way of foot traffic. Never block an exit.
- » Keep children away from the space heater.
- » Plug the heater directly into the wall outlet. Never use an extension cord.
- » Space heaters should be turned off and unplugged when you leave the room or go to bed.

Types of electric space heaters

Oil or water-filled radiator

Heated oil or water travels through the heater.

Fan-forced heater

A fan blows warm air over metal coils.

Ceramic heater

Air is warmed over a ceramic heating element.

Infrared heaters

Heat is created by infrared bulbs.

Fact

Nearly half of all space heater fires involve electric space heaters.



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Electrical Safety

Flipping a light switch. Plugging in a coffeemaker. Charging a laptop computer. These are second nature for most of us. Electricity makes our lives easier. However, we need to be cautious and keep safety in mind.



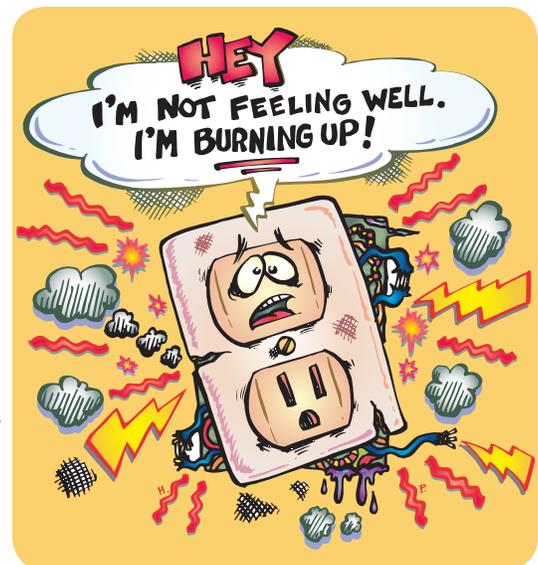
SAFETY TIPS

- »» Have all electrical work done by a qualified electrician.
- »» When you are buying or remodeling a home, have it inspected by a qualified inspector.
- »» Only use one heat-producing appliance (such as a coffee maker, toaster, space heater, etc.) plugged into a receptacle outlet at a time.
- »» Major appliances (refrigerators, dryers, washers, stoves, air conditioners, etc.) should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet. Extension cords and plug strips should not be used.
- »» Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) shut off electricity when a dangerous condition occurs. Consider having them installed in your home. Use a qualified electrician.
- »» Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to reduce the risk of shock. GFCIs shut off an electrical circuit when it becomes a shock hazard. They should be installed inside the home in bathrooms, kitchens, garages and basements. All outdoor receptacles should be GFCI protected.
- »» Test AFCIs and GFCIs once a month to make sure they are working properly.
- »» Check electrical cords to make sure they are not running across doorways or under carpets. Extension cords are intended for temporary use. Have a qualified electrician add more receptacle outlets so you don't have to use extension cords.
- »» Use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or fixture. There should be a sticker that indicates the maximum wattage light bulb to use.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

Call a qualified electrician or your landlord if you have:

- Frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers
- A tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance
- Discolored or warm wall outlets
- A burning or rubbery smell coming from an appliance
- Flickering or dimming lights
- Sparks from an outlet



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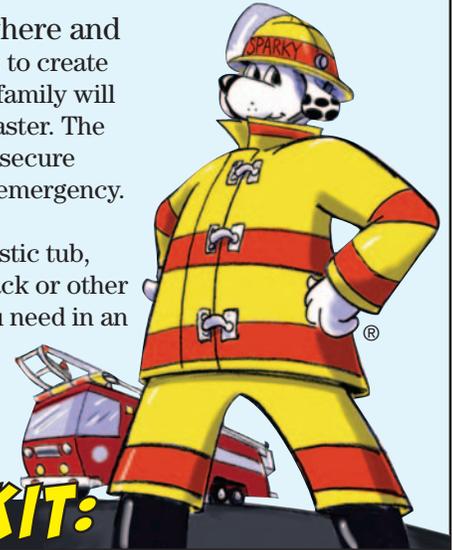
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GET READY!

Disasters can happen anywhere and at any time. By taking the time to create an emergency supplies kit, your family will be prepared in the event of a disaster. The kit also helps children feel more secure knowing it is there in case of an emergency.

The supplies can be kept in a plastic tub, small suitcase, trash can, backpack or other container. To learn what else you need in an emergency supplies kit, go to www.ready.gov.



Sparky® is a registered trademark of the NFPA.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES KIT:

- Water – one gallon per person per day for drinking and sanitation — store 3-day supply
- Ready-to-eat food, canned juices, comfort/stress foods — at least a 3-day supply
- Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio and a NOAA weather radio, and extra batteries for both
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Non-prescription drugs such as pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medication, antacid, laxative
- Prescription medications, contact lenses and supplies, denture needs
- Whistle to signal for help
- Infant formula and diapers, if you have an infant
- Water and pet food if you have pets
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Dust mask or cotton t-shirt to filter the air
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food
- Aluminum foil
- A jacket or coat, hat and gloves
- A complete change of clothing including long pants, long sleeve shirt, and sturdy shoes stored in a waterproof container.
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Rain gear
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Cash or traveler's checks, change
- Paper towels
- Tent
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Personal hygiene items
- Soap
- Disinfectant and household chlorine bleach
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container. Remember to include emergency contact numbers.
- Passport, bank account numbers, credit card account numbers and companies
- Books, games puzzles, portable music device

NOTE: Replace food every six months. Re-think your kit and family needs once a year. Replace batteries and update clothes, etc.

My Personal Pack Checklist

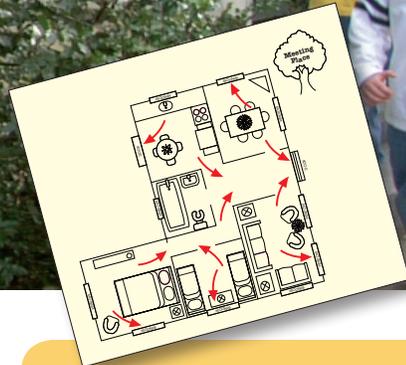
Have children create their personal pack. Have them include things like their favorite book or stuffed animal. These familiar things will help keep them comfortable during an emergency.

- ✓ Change of clothes
- ✓ Blanket
- ✓ Books
- ✓ Favorite toy
- ✓ Paper, pencils and crayons



Escape Planning

Plan Ahead! If a fire breaks out in your home, you may have only a few minutes to get out safely once the smoke alarm sounds. Everyone needs to know what to do and where to go if there is a fire.



SAFETY TIPS

- »» MAKE a home escape plan. Draw a map of your home showing all doors and windows. Discuss the plan with everyone in your home.
- »» KNOW at least two ways out of every room, if possible. Make sure all doors and windows leading outside open easily.
- »» HAVE an outside meeting place (like a tree, light pole or mailbox) a safe distance from the home where everyone should meet.
- »» PRACTICE your home fire drill at night and during the day with everyone in your home, twice a year.
- »» PRACTICE using different ways out.
- »» TEACH children how to escape on their own in case you can't help them.
- »» CLOSE doors behind you as you leave.

IF THE ALARM SOUNDS...

- »» If the smoke alarm sounds, GET OUT AND STAY OUT. Never go back inside for people or pets.
- »» If you have to escape through smoke, GET LOW AND GO under the smoke to your way out.
- »» CALL the fire department from outside your home.

FACTS

- ! A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire. Install smoke alarms inside every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area. Install alarms on every level of the home. Smoke alarms should be interconnected. When one smoke alarm sounds, they all sound.
- ! According to an NFPA survey, only **one of every three** American households have actually developed and practiced a home fire escape plan.
- ! While **71%** of Americans have an escape plan in case of a fire, only **47%** of those have practiced it.
- ! **One-third** of American households who made an estimate thought they would have at least 6 minutes before a fire in their home would become life-threatening. The time available is often less. And only **8%** said their first thought on hearing a smoke alarm would be to get out!



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Fire Alarms in Apartment Buildings

Large apartment buildings are built to keep people safe from fire. Fire alarm systems detect smoke and fire. They will warn residents of danger.

- » The fire alarm system has many parts that work together. Some of the parts are out of sight. In a fire, smoke detectors sense smoke and activate the fire alarm. Manual fire alarm boxes allow people to sound the alarm. When the fire alarm system activates it will warn residents of danger.
- » Everyone in the building should know where to find the manual fire alarm boxes (alarm boxes on the wall with a pull bar). Most are found within five feet of an exit door.
- » If there is a fire, pull the manual fire alarm box handle on your way out of the building.
- » When the system senses smoke or fire, a loud horn or tone will sound. Everyone must know what this sound means and how to react.
- » Leave the building right away if you hear the sound of a fire alarm. Stay outside at your meeting place until you are told the building is safe.
- » Treat every fire alarm as an emergency. When the alarms sounds, get outside.
- » Only use a manual fire alarm box if there is smoke or fire. Frequent false alarms are a problem. People might ignore the sound if they hear too many false alarms. False alarms also put firefighters at risk.

Escape 101

Know the locations of all exit stairs from your floor. If the nearest one is blocked by fire or smoke, you may have to use another exit.



If the fire alarm sounds feel the door before opening. If it is hot, use another way out. If it is cool, use this exit to leave.

Close all doors behind you as you leave. Take the key to your apartment in case you are not able to get out of the building.

If fire or smoke is blocking all exits, return or stay in your apartment. Keep the door closed. Cover cracks around the door with towels or tape. Call **9-1-1** and let the fire department know you are trapped. Signal from the window by waving a flashlight or light-colored cloth.

Meet with your landlord or building manager to learn about the fire safety features and plans in your building.



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The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), in cooperation with nine manufacturers and distributors, has announced a voluntary recall of all pourable gel fuel made or sold by these companies. Gel fuel is used with firepots, personal fireplaces, and patio torches. For more information go to www.cpsc.gov.

SAFETY RECALL

- » Due to the serious risk of flash fire and burns when consumers add pourable gel to an already burning fire pot, NFPA and CPSC are warning consumers to immediately stop using the pourable gel fuel.
- » Gel fuel and gel fuel pots should be considered an open flame and pose a serious danger.
- » The fuel can ignite unexpectedly and splatter onto people and objects nearby when it is poured in a firepot that is still burning.
- » Pouring gel fuel in a device that is not completely cool may result in a fire or injury.
- » These devices will be hot during and after burning.
- » The burning gel fuel sticks to skin and is difficult to extinguish.
- » It is not easy to see the gel fuel flame, especially in daylight.
- » All pourable gel fuel, regardless of manufacturer, poses a fire hazard.

Act Now!

Consumers should contact the gel fuel manufacturer for information on refunds and product return.

FACTS

- ❗ Stop, drop and roll may not put out clothing that catches fire involving splattered or spilled gel fuel.
- ❗ A dry chemical extinguisher or baking soda can be used to extinguish the fire.
- ❗ Several deaths and multiple victims with second and third degree burns have been reported.



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Generator Safety

Downed utility lines, power company blackouts, heavy snow falls or summer storms can all lead to power outages. Many people turn to a portable generator for a temporary solution without knowing the risks.

- » Generators should be used in well ventilated locations outside away from all doors, windows and vent openings.
- » Never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open.
- » Place generators so that exhaust fumes can't enter the home through windows, doors or other openings in the building.
- » Make sure to install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in your home. Follow manufacturer's instructions for correct placement and mounting height.
- » Turn off generators and let them cool down before refueling. Never refuel a generator while it is hot.



- » Store fuel for the generator in a container that is intended for the purpose and is correctly labeled as such. Store the containers outside of living areas.

Just Remember...

When plugging in appliances, make sure they are plugged directly into the generator or a heavy duty outdoor-rated extension cord. The cords should be checked for cuts, tears and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.

If you must connect the generator to the house wiring to power appliances, have a qualified electrician install a properly rated transfer switch in accordance with the National Electrical Code® (NEC) and all applicable state and local electrical codes.

FACT

- ! CO deaths associated with generators have spiked in recent years as generator sales have risen.



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Heating Safety

There is something about the winter months and curling up with a good book by the fireplace. But did you know that heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths? With a few simple safety tips and precautions you can prevent most heating fires from happening.

BE WARM AND SAFE THIS WINTER!

- »»» Keep anything that can burn at least three-feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- »»» Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- »»» Never use your oven to heat your home.
- »»» Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- »»» Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- »»» Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- »»» Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- »»» Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- »»» Test smoke alarms at least once a month.



Heating Equipment Smarts

Install wood burning stoves following manufacturer's instructions or have a professional do the installation. All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Install and maintain CO alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning. If you **smell** gas in your gas heater, do not light the appliance. Leave the home immediately and call your local fire department or gas company.



FACT

Half of home heating fires are reported during the months of **December, January, and February.**



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Hoarding and Fire: Reducing the Risk

Do you have a person in your life who may be a hoarder? Hoarding is a condition where a person has persistent difficulty discarding personal possessions. The large amount of possessions fill the home and prevent the normal use of the space. Living space becomes cluttered. It may be unusable. Hoarding brings distress and emotional health concerns.

WHY HOARDING INCREASES FIRE RISKS

- Cooking is unsafe if flammable items are close to the stove or oven.
- Heating units may be too close to things that can burn. They might also be placed on unstable surfaces. If a heater tips over into a pile, it can cause a fire.
- Electrical wiring may be old or worn from the weight of piles. Pests could chew on wires. Damaged wires can start fires.
- Open flames from smoking materials or candles in a home with excess clutter are very dangerous.
- Blocked pathways and exits may hinder escape from a fire.

HOW HOARDING IMPACTS FIRST RESPONDERS

- Hoarding puts first responders in harm's way.
- Firefighters cannot move swiftly through a home filled with clutter.
- Responders can be trapped in a home when exits are blocked. They can be injured by objects falling from piles.
- The weight of the stored items, especially if water is added to put out a fire, can lead to building collapse.
- Fighting fires is very risky in a hoarding home. It is hard to enter the home to provide medical care. The clutter impedes the search and rescue of people and pets.

How Can You Help Reduce the Risk of Fire Injury

- ✓ When talking a person who hoards, focus on safety rather than the clutter. Be empathetic. Match the person's language. If they call it hoarding, then you can call it hoarding.
- ✓ Help the residents make a home safety and escape plan. Stress the importance of clear pathways and exits. Practice the plan often. Exit routes may change as new items are brought into the home.
- ✓ Install working smoke alarms in the home. Test them at least once a month.
- ✓ Reach out to community resources. Talk to members of the fire department to alert them of your concerns. They may be able to connect you with members of a hoarding task force for additional help.



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Hotel & Motel Safety

Vacations and business travel make hotels and motels our home away from home. It is just as important to be prepared and know what you would do in a hotel/motel emergency as it is in your own home.

BE SAFE WHEN TRAVELING!

- Choose a hotel/motel that is protected by both smoke alarms and a fire sprinkler system.
- When you check in, ask the front desk what the fire alarm sounds like.
- When you enter your room, review the escape plan posted in your room.
- Take the time to find the exits and count the number of doors between your room and the exit. Make sure the exits are unlocked. If they are locked, report it to management right away.
- Keep your room key by your bed and take it with you if there is a fire.
- If the alarm sounds, leave right away, closing all doors behind you. Use the stairs — never use elevators during a fire.
- If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your exit.

If You Can't Escape...

SHUT off fans and air conditioners.

STUFF wet towels in the crack around the doors.

CALL the fire department and let them know your location.

WAIT at the window and signal with a flashlight or light colored cloth.

FACTS

- ❗ On average, one of every **13 hotels** or motels reported a structure fire each year.
- ❗ The majority of hotel fire deaths result from fires that started in the **bedroom**.
- ❗ **Cooking equipment** is the leading cause of hotel/motel fires.



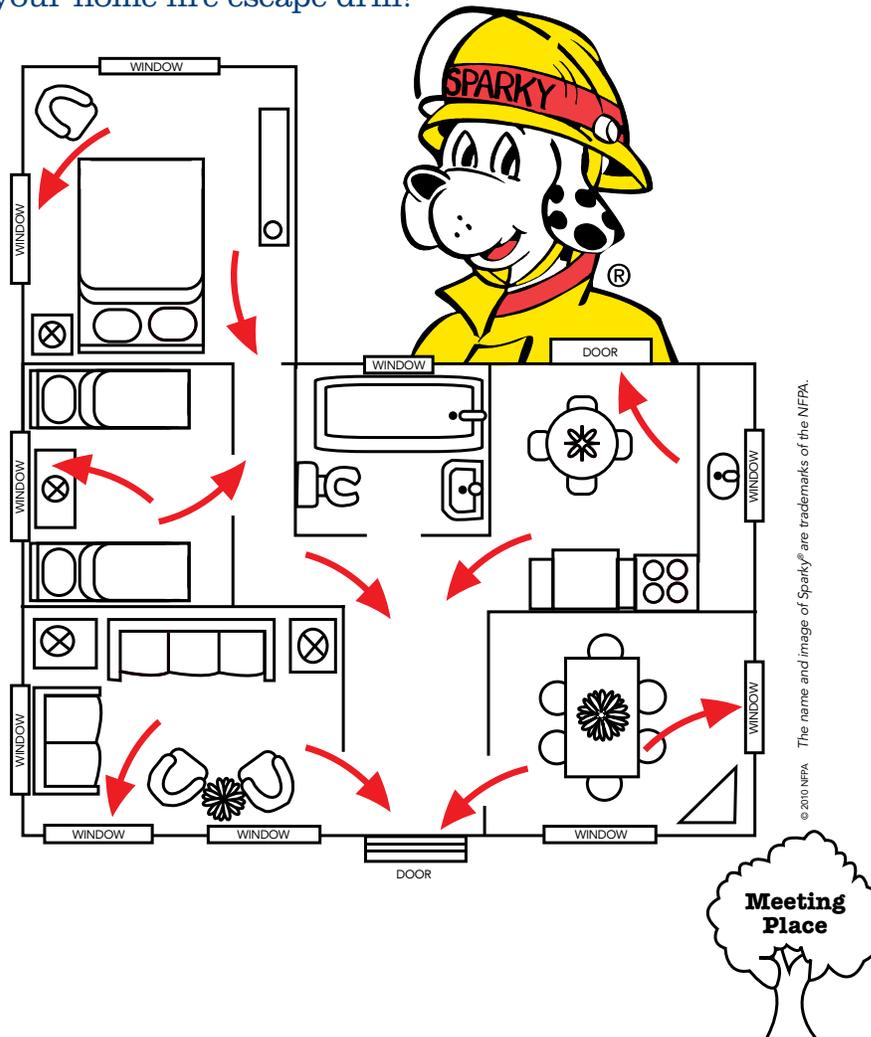
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How to Make a Home Fire Escape Plan

- Draw a map of your home. Show all doors and windows.
- Visit each room. Find two ways out.
- All windows and doors should open easily. You should be able to use them to get outside.
- Make sure your home has smoke alarms. Push the test button to make sure each alarm is working.
- Pick a meeting place outside. It should be in front of your home. Everyone will meet at the meeting place.
- Make sure your house or building number can be seen from the street.
- Talk about your plan with everyone in your home.
- Learn the emergency phone number for your fire department.
- Practice your home fire escape drill!



- Make your own home fire escape plan on the back of this paper.

— Keeping Your Community Safe with Home Fire Escape Drills —

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Lithium Ion Battery Safety

for Consumers



Lithium ion batteries supply power to many kinds of devices including smart phones, laptops, scooters, e-cigarettes, smoke alarms, toys, and even cars. Take care when using them. In rare cases, they can cause a fire or explosion.

The problem

- These batteries store a large amount of energy in a small amount of space.
- Sometimes batteries are not used the right way; batteries not designed for a specific use can be dangerous.
- Like any product, a small number of these batteries are defective. They can overheat, catch fire, or explode.

Safety Tips

- Purchase and use devices that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Only use the battery that is designed for the device.
- Put batteries in the device the right way.
- Only use the charging cord that came with the device.
- Do not charge a device under your pillow, on your bed or on a couch.
- Keep batteries at room temperature.
- Do not place batteries in direct sunlight or keep them in hot vehicles.
- Store batteries away from anything that can catch fire.



Signs of a Problem

Stop using the battery if you notice the problems.

- odor
- change in color
- too much heat
- change in shape
- leaking
- odd noises

If it is safe to do so, move the device away from anything that can catch fire. Call **9-1-1**.

Battery Disposal

- Do not put lithium ion batteries in the trash.
- Recycling is always the best option.
- Take them to a battery recycling location or contact your community for disposal instructions.
- Do not put discarded batteries in piles.
- Lithium ion batteries should be placed in a sealed metal container.



NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards



Pets give us comfort, friendship, and unconditional love. Our connection to them can be among the strongest relationships in our lives. But pets can cause fires. We need to be careful with pets in the home.

SAFETY TIPS

- »»» Pets are curious. They may bump into, turn on, or knock over cooking equipment. Keep pets away from stoves and countertops.
- »»» Keep pets away from candles, lamps, and space heaters.
- »»» Always use a metal or heat-tempered glass screen on a fireplace and keep it in place.
- »»» Keep pets away from a chimney's outside vents. Have a "pet-free zone" of at least 3 feet (1 meter) away from the fireplace. Glass doors and screens can stay dangerously hot for several hours after the fire goes out.
- »»» Consider battery-operated, flameless candles. They can look and smell like real candles.
- »»» Some pets are chewers. Watch pets to make sure they don't chew through electrical cords. Have any problems checked by a professional.

SMOKE ALARMS

- »»» Have working smoke alarms on every level of the home. Test your smoke alarms at least once a month.
- »»» If the smoke alarm sounds, get out and stay out.
- »»» Never go back inside for pets in a fire. Tell firefighters if your pet is trapped.

Pets and Wildfires

Make sure pets are included in your family's wildfire evacuation plan. Build an evacuation kit for each pet in your household. Ensure each kit is a size and weight that can be quickly and easily loaded into a vehicle when packing to evacuate.



FACT

Pets and wild animals have a part in starting about 700 home fires per year. Roughly three-quarters of these fires were started by cooking equipment, fireplaces or chimneys, lighting, or candles.



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Portable Fireplace Safety



There is nothing like sitting by an open fire on a cold night. Indoor and outdoor portable ethanol burning fireplaces have become more popular in recent years. While these products provide ambiance and a little warmth, keep in mind the fuel, device and open flame can be dangerous.

Fireplace Safety

- » A portable ethanol burning fireplace, and the fuel, should only be used by adults.
- » Clean up any fuel spillage and be sure all liquid has evaporated before lighting the fireplace.
- » Light the fireplace using a utility lighter or long match.
- » An adult should always be present when a portable fireplace is burning.
- » Place the fireplace on a sturdy surface away from table edges.
- » It's a good idea to crack a window open for a fresh supply of air.
- » Never try to move a lit fireplace or one that is still hot.
- » Don't pour ethanol fuel in a device that is lit or not completely cool. It may result in a fire or injury.
- » Allow the device to cool down for at least 15 minutes before refueling.
- » Extinguish the flame when you leave the room, home or go to sleep.

General Fire Safety

- Keep anything that can burn, children and pets at least 3 feet from the fireplace.
- Store lighters and matches out of the reach of children, in a locked cabinet.

Ethanol Fuel Smarts

Store ethanol fuel in a closed container, away from the fireplace and out of the reach of children.

It may not be easy to see the ethanol fuel flame. Always close the lid or use a snuffer to be sure the flame is extinguished before refueling into a cooled fireplace.

Use only fuel made specifically for the fireplace.



FACT

Ethanol is a plant-based product that does not release new carbon monoxide into the air.



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Safety in Places of Public Assembly

Every day, millions of people wake up, go to work or school, and take part in social events. But every so often the unexpected happens: an earthquake, a fire, a chemical spill, an act of terrorism or some other disaster. Routines change drastically, and people are suddenly aware of how fragile their lives and routines can be. Each disaster can have lasting effects — people may be seriously injured or killed, and devastating and costly property damage can occur. People entering any public assembly building need to be prepared in case of an emergency.

BEFORE YOU ENTER

- » **Take a good look.** Does the building appear to be in a condition that makes you feel comfortable? Is the main entrance wide and does it open outward to allow easy exit? Is the outside area clear of materials stored against the building or blocking exits?
- » **Have a communication plan.** Identify a relative or friend to contact in case of emergency and you are separated from family or friends.
- » **Plan a meeting place.** Pick a meeting place outside to meet family or friends with whom you are attending the function. If there is an emergency, be sure to meet them there.

WHEN YOU ENTER

- » **Take a good look.** Locate exits immediately. When you enter a building you should look for all available exits. Some exits may be in front and some in back of you. Be prepared to use your closest exit. You may not be able to use the main exit.
- » **Check for clear exit paths.** Make sure aisles are wide enough and not obstructed by chairs or furniture. Check to make sure your exit door is not blocked or chained. If there are not at least two exits or exit paths are blocked, report the violation to management and leave the building if it is not immediately addressed. Call the local fire marshal to register a complaint.
- » **Do you feel safe?** Does the building appear to be overcrowded? Are there fire sources such as candles burning, cigarettes or cigars burning, pyrotechnics, or other heat sources that may make you feel unsafe? Are there safety systems in place such as alternative exits, sprinklers, and smoke alarms? Ask the management for clarification on your concerns. If you do not feel safe in the building, leave immediately.

DURING AN EMERGENCY

React immediately. If an alarm sounds, you see smoke or fire, or some other unusual disturbance immediately exit the building in an orderly fashion.

Get out, stay out! Once you have escaped, stay out. Under no circumstances should you ever go back into a burning building. Let trained firefighters conduct rescue operations.

FACT

A fire at The Station nightclub in W. Warwick, RI, on February 20, 2003, claimed 100 lives and is the fourth-deadliest nightclub fire in U.S. history. Since that fire, NFPA has enacted tough new code provisions for fire sprinklers and crowd management in nightclub-type venues. Those provisions mark sweeping changes to the codes and standards governing safety in assembly occupancies.



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Security Bar Safety

People are afraid of crime near their homes. To feel safe, many people install security bars on their doors and windows. Some security bars, also called burglar bars, can trap you in a fire. They can also keep firefighters from getting in to rescue you.

Tips for Home Escape

- Have working smoke alarms in each bedroom. You also need one outside each sleeping area. Install alarms on every level of the home. Mount alarms in the basement.
- Test all smoke alarms once a month. Press the test button to be sure the alarms are working.
- Draw a map of your home. Show all doors and windows. Find at least two ways out of every room.
- Choose an outside meeting place. It should be a safe distance from the home. It should be visible from the street.
- Talk about the plan with everyone in your home. Have a fire drill in your home twice a year.
- Make sure all exits can be opened easily from the inside. This includes barred doors and windows.
- Choose security bars that have quick-release devices. Make sure everyone in the home can open them.

Quick-release security bars

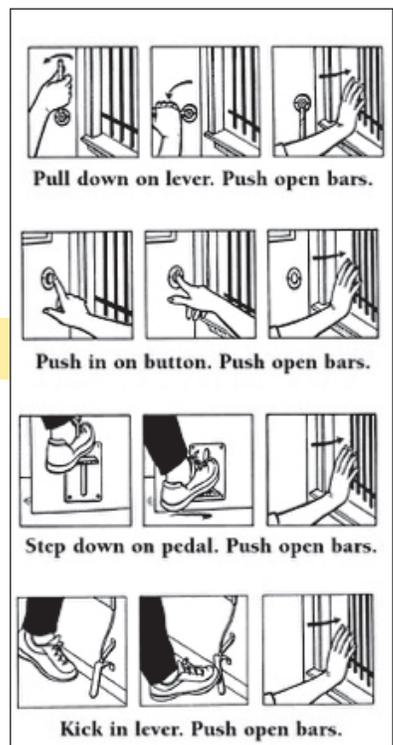
In some areas, laws have been passed about security bars. In many places, codes and laws require the security bars have a quick-release device. NFPA Life Safety Code states that all ways out must be opened easily from inside. Tools, keys, or special effort should not be needed to escape.

- Ask your fire department or housing official about the laws in your area.
- Ask community leaders to get funds to update the security bars. This will help more people have quick-release bars.
- Ask the fire department for a presentation on security bars and home escape.

FACT

About **50** people are injured or die each year in **home** fires in which security bars got in the way of escape.

Make sure security bars have quick-release devices:



Pull down on lever. Push open bars.

Push in on button. Push open bars.

Step down on pedal. Push open bars.

Kick in lever. Push open bars.

Types of quick-release devices.



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Smoke Alarms at Home



SMOKE ALARMS ARE A KEY PART of a home fire escape plan. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so you can get outside quickly.

SAFETY TIPS

- » Install smoke alarms inside and outside each bedroom and sleeping area. Install alarms on every level of the home. Install alarms in the basement.
- » Large homes may need extra smoke alarms.
- » It is best to use interconnected smoke alarms. When one smoke alarm sounds they all sound.
- » Test all smoke alarms at least once a month. Press the test button to be sure the alarm is working.
- » There are two kinds of alarms. Ionization smoke alarms are quicker to warn about flaming fires. Photoelectric alarms are quicker to warn about smoldering fires. It is best to use both types of alarms in the home.
- » A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from the stove.
- » People who are hard-of-hearing or deaf can use special alarms. These alarms have strobe lights and bed shakers.
- » Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.

FACTS

- ! A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
- ! Smoke alarms should be installed inside every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area and on every level. Smoke alarms should be connected so when one sounds, they all sound. Most homes do not have this level of protection.
- ! Roughly 3 out of 5 fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or the alarms are not working.



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Smoking & Home Fire Safety



The place where we feel safest — at home — is where most smoking-materials structure fires, deaths, and injuries occur. Smoking materials are the leading cause of fire deaths. Smoking material fires are preventable.

Smoking Safety

- » If you smoke, use only fire-safe cigarettes.
- » If you smoke, smoke outside. Most deaths result from fires that started in living rooms, family rooms and dens or in bedrooms.
- » Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, and other smoking materials up high out of the reach of children, in a locked cabinet.

Put It Out

- » Use a deep, sturdy ashtray. Place it away from anything that can burn.
- » Do not discard cigarettes in vegetation such as mulch, potted plants or landscaping, peat moss, dried grasses, leaves or other things that could ignite easily.
- » Before you throw away butts and ashes, make sure they are out, and dousing in water or sand is the best way to do that.

Smoking and Medical Oxygen

Never smoke and never allow anyone to smoke where medical oxygen is used. Medical oxygen can cause materials to ignite more easily and make fires burn at a faster rate than normal. It can make an existing fire burn faster and hotter.

ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

Fires have occurred while e-cigarettes were being used, the battery was being charged, or the device was being transported. Battery failures have led to small explosions. Never leave charging e-cigarettes unattended. E-cigarettes should be used with caution.

FACTS

- ! The risk of dying in a home structure fire caused by smoking materials rises with age.
- ! One out of four fatal victims of smoking-material fires is not the smoker whose cigarette started the fire.



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FIRE SAFETY TIPS
FOR
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

JANUARY 2017