

Fire Escape Plans

Every home should have a Fire Escape Plan and family members should practice their plan together at least once a year. This may sound silly but, time and time again, it has proven to save lives.

Below are a few recommendations and tips to remember:

Plan Ahead

- Install smoke detectors and change their batteries twice a year. (Remember to spring forward, fall back)
- Make a Fire Escape Plan (it's too late to make a plan once a fire has begun).
- Close bedroom doors when sleeping. <https://closeyourdoor.org/>

A Fire Escape Plan should be written down and posted in your house with a copy given to each person. When creating your Fire Escape Plan remember to include the following:

Everyone should know 2 ways out. That would include each room and the house. If a way out includes windows, everyone should practice opening the window. Any window not in working order should be fixed. Let every family member know that it is O.K. to break the window if necessary and show them how to safely break glass (use a blanket or towel to lay over the frame to help prevent cuts when you climb out). Fire escape ladders should be kept by the window of sleeping rooms above the level of exit discharge.

All family members should understand smoke and its dangers. Most fires in the home release very toxic smoke. It is therefore very important to teach everyone that smoke rises and they should crawl when the room is filled with smoke. In addition, test all doors before opening them. Feel the door to see if it or the door knob is hot. If it is then use the second escape route out of the room.

A very important addition to a Fire Escape Plan should be the Meeting Location Place. Once out of the house, all family members should gather at one central meeting place. When a fire breaks out things can get confusing very fast. If each family member knows where to go after exiting the house this will help to identify if a family member may still be inside the home. Please note, do not attempt to return to the home to save a pet. Many people have died doing so.

Remember to provide for family members who may require special assistance in exiting the home in the event of a fire. This may include disabled family members, infants and young children. Small children usually go to closets or under beds when they are afraid. Make sure they understand not to hide. Get the children out before you exit since they may become scared and decide not to follow you.

This may seem like a lot to remember, which is why it is **very important** to implement your Fire Escape Plan and practice it often.