

Escape Planning for Home Fires

In just minutes, a small flame can turn into a major fire. The results can be tragic, as more than 3,400 Americans die annually in fires, and approximately 17,500 are injured.

Have a Plan

A sound escape plan greatly reduces fire deaths and protects a family's safety if a fire occurs. Many families, though, do not plan ahead.

Practice Two Escape Routes From Every Room in the House

If the main exit from a room is blocked by fire or smoke, a second way out is necessary. This might be a window or a collapsible ladder, which should have been tested by a nationally recognized laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).

Be aware of and remove obstacles that may prevent a safe evacuation (e.g., blocked exits, jammed/barred windows). Practice exiting in the dark or with your eyes closed.

Keep child bedroom doors closed to help prevent smoke from entering.

Hold fire drills during the night to assess children's ability to awaken and respond. If anyone cannot awaken to or hear the smoke alarm, the plan should be adjusted.

Security Bars Require Special Precautions

Windows/doors with security bars need quick-release devices to allow immediate exit.

Immediately Exit the Home

Leave property behind. Take the safest exit. If you must escape through smoke, crawl under the smoke and keep your mouth covered from the toxic gases.

Never Open Doors that are Hot to the Touch

Feel the top of the door, the doorknob, and the crack between the door and door frame to make sure that fire is not on the other side. If it's hot, use the secondary escape route. Even if the door feels cool, open slowly while bracing a shoulder against the door. If heat and smoke enter, slam the door and use an alternate escape route.

Designate a Meeting Place Outside and Take Attendance

Ensure everyone's safety and that no one is looking for those who are already out.

Once Out, Stay Out

Call 911 or an emergency number. If someone is missing, report it immediately.

Resources

U.S. Fire Administration (USFA): www.usfa.fema.gov

Additional Information

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