

Safety Sense

Don't Get Burned



Most people think a home fire won't happen to them. According to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the home is actually where people are at greatest risk, with 74% of US fire deaths occurring in homes. Installing monitored smoke and CO detectors is one way to reduce that statistic and help keep your loved ones and properties safe.

Of course, educating your family on what to do if a fire happens and creating and practicing an escape plan are critical safety factors as well. When creating a family escape plan consider:

- Identifying Primary and Secondary Exits – Select at least 2 exits for each room.
- Create a Floor Plan – Sketch a simple floor plan of the house and mark each exit. Then label primary and secondary exits in each room. Keep copies of the floor plan in accessible areas.
- Clear Pathways – Make sure your escape routes are free of obstacles.
- Practice – Have the entire family practice the escape plan several times using all selected exits.
- Roles – Assign roles to family members, like assigning someone to help young children and another to gather pets.

You should also educate yourself and your family on these fire safety tips:

- Don't Jump Up Out of Bed – If you wake up and sense a fire, do not jump up out of bed because the heat is more intense the farther from the floor. Instead, roll out of bed onto the floor.
- Crawl to the Door – After you roll onto the floor, crawl to the door. (Tip: you should always keep your door closed while you are asleep). Touch the door at the bottom and the top and to see if it is hot. If it is, DO NOT OPEN IT! Instead, plan to use an alternate escape route.
- Try the Door – If it isn't hot to the touch, slowly open it about one – two inches, bracing it firmly, as there may be pressure from gases on the other side that could force the door to open quickly. If the air from behind the door is warm, do not use the hallways. Pull the door shut and use an alternate escape route.
- How to Crawl to Safety – If you are able to crawl to safety via the hallways, keep your head about one – two feet off the floor. Cover your nose and mouth with a cloth and take short, shallow breaths.
- Escape Ladders – Keep a collapsible escape ladder in each bedroom above the first level and train the entire family on how to use them. You can practice using the escape ladder from a first-floor window.
- Meeting Place – Pick a meeting spot where the entire family needs to go after escaping a fire. The meeting spot should be a safe distance away from your home and easy to reach.
- Don't Go Back – Material objects can be replaced, so do not go back into a burning home for them.
- Pull the Door Closed – If possible, pull the door closed on your way out to hamper the spread of the fire.

