

Escape Planning

Smoke alarms can only warn of danger. You must then take action to escape. Unless you act quickly and effectively, the extra warning time provided by alarms could be wasted. The best way to assure that your family will do the correct things in an emergency is to have an escape plan and practice it. The important factors in a home fire evacuation plan are:



Immediately leave the home

Do not waste any time saving property. Call the fire department (Use 911 if available) from a neighbor's home. Take the safest exit route, but if you must escape through smoke remember to crawl low under the smoke.

Know two ways out of each room

If the primary way out is blocked by fire or smoke, you will need a second way out. This might be a window onto an adjacent roof or by using an escape ladder (tested and approved by a recognized testing laboratory). Practice escaping by both the primary and secondary routes to be sure that windows are not stuck and screens can be taken out quickly. Windows and doors with security bars need quick release devices to allow them to be opened quickly in an emergency. Practice escaping in the dark.

Feel the door

When you come to a closed door, use the back of your hand to feel the top of the door, the door knob, and the crack between the door and door frame to make sure that fire is not on the other side. If it feels hot, use your secondary escape route. Even if the door feels cool, open it carefully. Brace your shoulder against the door and open slowly. If heat and smoke come in, slam the door and make sure it is securely closed. Use your alternate escape route.

Have an arranged meeting place

If you all meet under a specific tree or at the end of the driveway or front sidewalk, you will know that everyone has gotten out safely and no one will be hurt looking for someone who is already safe. Designate one person to go to a neighbor's home to phone the fire department.

Once out, STAY OUT!

Never go back into a burning building for any reason. If someone is missing, tell the fire fighters. They are equipped to perform rescues safely.