

A HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN Can Prevent Tragedy

Most fire victims never even see flames. They die from smoke inhalation. Planning and practicing a home fire prevention and escape plan can save your life.

In order to react fast to fire, you should draw a diagram of your house and plan your escape from each room, to familiarize yourself with it. However, since the majority of fire deaths occur while you are sleeping, you should practice your plan at night as well, get down on your hands and knees with a flash light and crawl to safety.

KILLING FORCE OF FIRE:

- **The smoke is black**, and very thick, it is impossible to see.
- **You have no time for indecision**, an entire house can be completely involved in five minutes.
- **Most people are killed by smoke inhalation** not the flame of the fire.
- **The heat of the fire is extremely intense** and can kill you instantly.
- Statistics show that 78 percent of deaths from fire occur in the home and most of these fatal fires occur between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. when occupants are sleeping.

CREATE YOUR PERSONAL ESCAPE PLAN, DO THE FOLLOWING:

- Install smoke alarms on every level - outside the bedroom, near the kitchen and garage.
- Keep smoke alarms clean and dust-free. Check smoke alarms monthly. (Some fire departments and manufacturers say weekly.)
- Replace batteries yearly and alarms every 10 years.
- Draw a floor plan of all levels of your home with normal and emergency exits including two from each bedroom.
- Designate a safe meeting place outside and someone to call 911 from a neighbour's home.
- Practice the plan, including crawling out with eyes closed (heavy smoke impairs breathing and sight; staying close to the floor increases chances of escape).
- If needed practice using escape ladders — discuss with a fire department official whether an escape ladder would be appropriate.
- Small children unable to escape can learn to open their windows and wave an article of clothing to attract attention. Instruct them to wait at the window until someone comes and to never hide from the fire.

- Sleep with doors closed. If children are frightened, parents can close doors after the children fall asleep and use a room monitor to hear them in the night.
- If awakened by a smoke alarm or a fire, instruct family members to feel the door for heat and check air at bottom. If you don't smell smoke and the air is cool, kneel and open the door slowly, turning your face away from the opening. If smoke is present or the door is hot, use another exit.
- Purchase an "A-B-C" fire extinguisher and learn how to use it by remembering the acronym PASS. PULL the pin, AIM the extinguisher, SQUEEZE or press the handle, SWEEP side to side at the base of the fire. (An extinguisher's rating is based on the fuel. "A" is a wood or paper fire; "B" is caused by flammable liquids; "C" is an electrical fire.)

For further information, contact:

Office of the Fire Commissioner
1st Floor, 800 Johnson Street
PO Box 9491 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9N7
Phone: 250 356-9000
Toll-Free: 1 888 988-9488
Fax: 250 356-9019
E-mail: OFC@gov.bc.ca
Web: www.pssq.gov.bc.ca/firecom

2006



Fire Prevention Canada

Working with the private and public sectors to achieve fire safety through education.

