



**American
Red Cross**



**America's Biggest
Disaster Threat**

FIRE ESCAPE PLANNING

Fast Facts

- Only 26 percent of families have actually developed and practiced a home fire escape plan.*
- Eighty percent of Americans don't realize that home fires are the single most common disaster across the nation.*
- The number of home fires the American Red Cross has responded to has risen 10% since 2000.*
- Every two and a half hours someone is killed in a home fire. In a typical year, 20,000 people are injured in home fires.**
- Having a working smoke alarm reduces one's chances of dying in a fire by nearly half.**
- Children and older adults are twice as likely to die in a home fire as the American population at large.***

Preparedness Tips

- ü Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home and outside of sleeping areas.
- ü Test smoke alarm batteries every month and change them at least once a year.
- ü Make sure everyone in your family knows at least two ways to escape from every room of your home.
- ü Practice your fire escape plan at least twice a year. Designate a meeting spot outside and a safe distance from your home. Make sure all family members know the meeting spot.
- ü Have your family practice escaping from your home, practicing low crawling and at different times of the day. Make sure everyone knows how to call 9-1-1.
- ü Consider escape ladders for sleeping areas on the second or third floor. Make sure everyone in your home learns how to use them ahead of time by reading the manufacturer's instructions and understanding the steps to use them. Store them near the window where they will be used.
- ü Teach your family to stop, drop to the ground, and roll if their clothes catch on fire. Practice this with your children.
- ü Once you get out of your home, stay out under all circumstances, until a fire official gives you permission to go back inside.
- ü Never open doors that are warm to the touch.
- ü If smoke, heat, or flames block your exit routes, stay in the room with the door closed. If possible, place a towel under the door and call the fire department to alert them to your location in the home. Go to the window and signal for help waving a bright-colored cloth or a flashlight. Do not break the window, but open it from the top and bottom.
- ü Visit www.redcross.org/homefires for more information on creating home fire escape plans.

Sources: American Red Cross, U.S. Fire Administration,** and the National Fire Protection Association.****