

# **Family Fire Escape Planning Kit**

**Provided By  
The Overland Park  
Fire Department**

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## How To Make A Fire Escape Plan

- 1) Make sure there is a working smoke detector on every level of your home. Use the test button on the detector. This should be done once a month along with a good vacuuming of the detector.

- 2) Check your house numbers to be sure they are posted on the house in at least 4" numbers that contrast with their background and can easily be seen from the street.



- 3) Draw a simple floor plan of your house. This does not have to be to scale and you do not have to include furniture. Do include windows and doors in each room. Also, use one page per floor. Don't try to draw in 3-D. Graph paper has been provided to assist you with this.



- 4) Mark the first way out of every room in your house. This is usually the door. The first way out should be the way you typically enter the room.
- 5) Using a different color crayon or pen mark the second way out of every room. In most rooms it will be a window. It should be the second most direct way out of the room to the outside. Avoid going through other rooms on this one if at all possible. Also, the window would still be an option even if the room is on the second floor and very high (see tips and tricks if this applies to you).

- 6) With your plan in hand, walk through the house. Check every window you marked as an exit on your plan. Be sure it opens properly and easily. Make sure furniture or other items have not been placed in front of it making it hard to use as an exit. Check every door. Make sure it can be opened easily if it is closed. Check the exit doors you plan to use to the outside (usually the front door, back door, basement door, etc.). Make sure they do not have furniture or other items on the inside blocking them as an exit. Make sure there is



not landscaping or other items on the outside that make them hard to use as an exit. Be sure locks and handles work properly and easily.

- 7) Choose a meeting place in front of the house. This needs to be something permanent like a tree, lamppost, the neighbor's porch, a mailbox, etc. Do not choose things with wheels such as automobiles, RVs and boats. They can easily be moved and may not be there when you need them. This will especially confuse younger children. Make sure the location is in a spot where you can easily be seen by the fire department when they arrive. You can always move to another location once you've let the fire department know everyone is out safe.



- 8) Hold a family meeting to review the plan. Explain to each member of the family what their role is if there is a fire (who gets the baby, helps grandma, etc.). Make sure each member of the family understands the two exits from their bedroom. Have each family member go to their room and



demonstrate that they can open the necessary windows and doors. Make sure each family member understands how locks and handles on outside doors operate and have them demonstrate that they can open them.

- 9) Post the plan in a place where the whole family can see it on a regular basis. The refrigerator, family bulletin board or office is a good suggestion. Smaller children especially may benefit from having a plan of their own posted on their wall in their bedroom.
- 10) Have regular fire drills to practice the plan.
- 11) Review the plan on a regular basis. A good suggestion is to review it whenever the seasons change. You will be more likely to discover windows that are swollen shut or doors that are blocked by overgrown landscaping. At least review it two times a year.



## Fire Drill Pointers

It is important that you not only make a fire plan but that you practice it regularly. This keeps it fresh in everyone's mind.

Hold fire drills at least twice a year. A way to remember fire drills might be to have one every time someone in the family has a birthday. Of course this way, larger families will have more drills than smaller families, but really the more people you have the more you should practice it anyway.

Fire drills do not have to happen in the middle of the night or be a complete surprise in order to be effective. While a surprise drill may not be a bad idea once in a while, just having the drills at all is a good opportunity for everyone to practice what they know.

Have family members start the drill from their bed. Be sure they feel doors before opening them and crawl low. Go down stairs on your bottom.

Time your drills. Try to beat your previous time.

It's okay for the drill to be a game, especially for younger children. It is how most of us learn best. In fact, call it the fire drill game. It will seem less scary to a younger child.

If your family gets really good at it then test them further. Make a sign that says fire and put it in the path of exit.

Make them choose a second way. NOTE: Stop the drill before anyone actually climbs out of a window so that no one gets hurt.





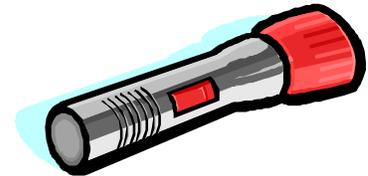
## Tips And Tricks For A Successful Fire Escape Plan

- ? ? Working smoke detectors are your first line of defense. They will give you early warning that there is a problem. Be sure you have at least one on every level of your house.
- ? ? Be sure that everyone in the household understands that once you are out of the house you stay out. No one goes back in for any reason.
- ? ? Be sure everyone understands to leave everything and get out. The quicker you get out and call the fire department, the quicker we can get there and save your stuff. Don't waste precious time looking for things. Just leave.
- ? ? Pets are precious too but they are not worth your life. Many times dogs and cats particularly will find their own way out anyway. Don't waste time looking for a pet. Get out and tell the fire department when they arrive that your pet is still inside. Be ready to describe where the pet may be (especially if they might be hiding).
- ? ? If you are on the second floor and there is too much smoke and/or fire for you to exit the normal way here is what you should do. First close the door and stick something like a towel, yesterday's blue jeans, a bathrobe in the crack under the door. Go to the window and open it. Take the screen out if you can. If there is a telephone in the room call 9-1-1 and tell them where you are, even if you can hear the fire trucks very near. They will relay the message to the fire commander. Make lots of noise at the window to call attention to the fact that you need help.

? ? If someone in your house is a heavy sleeper, try giving a whistle to a lighter sleeper in the household. The extra noise will help rouse them.

? ? Small children sometimes enjoy having their very own copy of the family plan in their room. It is a good reminder for them and gives them a feeling of ownership.

? ? Place a flashlight in everyone's room. Store it on the floor next to the bed. This will give everyone a little added sense of security.



? ? Have a safety check day once a month and get the whole family involved. Adults can test the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Teens and tweens can test safety devices on vehicles such as headlights, emergency & turn signal flashers and brake lights; they can also check sports equipment for cracked shells, frayed straps and broken snaps. Younger children can test flashlights and either change the batteries or bring them to you for a battery change.

? ? Make it a rule that no one disables a smoke detector for any reason. If the detector sounds because of smoke from cooking or steam, waive a magazine under it until it stops sounding.



? ? Avoid fires in the first place by using electrical and heating equipment properly. When cooking stay with what you are cooking. Don't leave candles burning unattended. Most importantly keep fire tools such as lighters and matches in a secure place locked away from small children.

Familv Name

Floor