

# Home Fire

## Preparedness Checklist

Home fires are the most common type of emergency in the United States, and can cause deaths, injuries and property loss within minutes of breaking out. Home fires occur every day across the country but we can take action to prepare. Prepare now to protect yourself, your loved ones and your home.



## Prevent Home Fires

You can prevent home fires by following basic safety tips.



### Cooking Safety

Cooking fires are the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries.

- Stay in the kitchen and closely monitor your meal anytime you are cooking. **Keep an eye on what you fry!**
- Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stove.
- Install and learn how to use a fire extinguisher. Contact your local fire department for training.
- If you have a small cooking fire:
  - On a stovetop, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
  - For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the oven door closed.
  - **If in doubt, just get out!** If flames spread to objects beyond the stove or oven, evacuate immediately. When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
- Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number from outside the home.



### Heating Safety

Use caution around heating equipment such as space heaters and fireplaces. Keep anything that could catch fire at least **3 feet from the heat**.



### Electrical Safety

Use caution with electrical equipment.

- Always plug appliances directly into wall outlets. Extension cords are for short-term use.
- Check power cords. Make sure they are not across doorways or under carpets where they might get pinched or wear out.
- Have all electrical work done by a certified electrician.



### Child Safety

Children "playing" with fire is dangerous. Each year these types of fires cause many preventable injuries and deaths.

- Store matches and lighters out of children's reach and sight.
- Teach young children to never touch matches or lighters.



### Smoking Safety

Smoking is a leading cause of home fire deaths.

- If you smoke, do so outside. Make sure to extinguish smoking materials in a deep and sturdy ashtray.
- Never smoke or allow anyone to smoke where medical oxygen is used.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Use e-cigarettes with caution. Serious fires and injuries can occur when e-cigarettes are being used, charged or transported.



### Candle Safety

Avoid using candles because of the fire risk. Use battery-powered lights and flashlights instead.

- If you must use a candle, use extreme caution and never leave it unattended.

## Install and maintain smoke alarms



Working smoke alarms save lives and can cut the risk of dying in a home fire in half.

- Be sure that you install smoke alarms in your home and that you maintain and test them regularly.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas.

- Make sure everyone in your home knows the sound of a smoke alarm and what to do if it goes off.
- Test ALL smoke alarms at least once a month by pressing the test button.

### More About Smoke Alarms

- Smoke alarms with 10-year batteries are good for up to 10 years.
- 9-volt smoke alarms should have their batteries replaced at least once a year.
- Hardwired smoke alarms often have a backup battery in case your power goes out. Be sure to replace the 9-volt battery if the alarm begins to chirp.
- Most smoke alarms, regardless of power source, are effective for 10 years. Replace all smoke alarms once they reach this age.
- If your alarm is chirping, it means the battery is low.

- 10-Year Battery – Replace the entire smoke alarm.
- 9 Volt Battery – Replace the battery and check the date of alarm manufacture. Replace if older than 10 years.
- Hardwired – Replace the backup battery and check the date of alarm manufacture. Replace if older than 10 years.
- Consider installing interconnected smoke alarms. When one sounds, they all sound.
- NEVER disable a smoke alarm by removing batteries or removing from the wall or ceiling, even temporarily. It's easy to forget about the alarm and leaves your family at risk.
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing are at risk because they may not be able to hear a standard smoke alarm. There are devices available to alert people who are deaf or hard of hearing, including bed shaker alarms and strobe light smoke alarms.

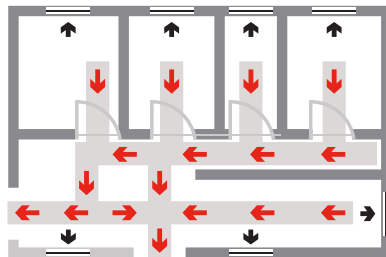
## Practice Your 2-Minute Home Fire Escape Plan



Make and practice a home fire escape plan with your household so that everyone knows what to do and can escape in less than two minutes:

- Find two paths to the outside from every room. The first path will often be a doorway. The second path may be a window or a second doorway. You need two paths in case your first path is blocked by smoke or flames.
- Make sure your escape paths are clear and not blocked by clutter, furniture or equipment.
- Choose a safe outside meeting place where everyone will go after they have escaped the fire so that you know everyone is safe.
- Account for all those who may need extra assistance in your planning, including infants, small children, older adults and individuals with a disability, access or functional needs. Make sure that someone is assigned to help them, if needed, and that everyone can use the escape routes.

← First Escape Path  
 ← Second Escape Path



Practice your escape plan twice a year with your entire household. Remind everyone:

- If a fire starts in your home, you may have less than two minutes to escape safely.
- **Get out and stay out!** Leave everything behind and get out as quickly as you can. **NEVER** go back into a burning building.
- If smoke or fire blocks one of your ways out, use another way out. If you must go through smoke, **get low and go** under the smoke to escape.
- Everyone in your household should plan to **meet at your designated outside meeting place.**
- **Call 911 from a safe place outside your home.**

If windows have security bars, make sure they have a quick release. Make sure everyone knows how to use them. Consider escape ladders for second floor sleeping areas.



Multi-Family Homes/High-Rise Buildings:

- If there is an outside fire escape, know how to use it in an emergency.
- Know your building's escape plan. Identify the fire doors and fire-safe stairways on your floor. Practice by counting the number of doors between your apartment and the fire exits. This can help you escape in the dark by feeling your way along the hallway wall.
- Never take the elevator during a fire.

Prepare so you can protect.

For more information, visit [redcross.org/prepare](https://www.redcross.org/prepare)

Download the Emergency App

