



# Household Fires

Fires in homes are most often caused by cooking accidents, smoking or unsafe use of woodstoves or space heaters. Here are some things you can do to avoid a home fire or protect yourself during a fire.

## Protecting against fires

- Install smoke detectors in or near all sleeping areas and on every level of your home, including the basement. Check smoke detectors on a regular basis and replace the batteries twice yearly.
- Have A-B-C type fire extinguishers. Teach family members how to use them.
- Know the location of all exits including windows. If you live in an apartment, count the number of doorways between your apartment and the two nearest exits.
- Know two ways out of every room in case smoke or flames block your primary exit.
- Choose a meeting place outside the home.
- Have an escape plan and practice it with your family. This will help ensure you can get out quickly when there is no time for mistakes.
- Keep folding or chain style ladders stored in each upstairs bedroom.
- Use alternative heat sources, such as woodstoves or space heaters, safely:
  - Never use gas ovens, gas ranges, barbecues, or most portable or propane heaters for indoor heating.
  - Before using an alternative heat source, read the manufacturer's instructions.
- Do not smoke in the bedroom, on the couch or anywhere you might fall asleep while smoking.
- Sleep with your bedroom door closed.
- Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street and that fire trucks can reach your home.
- Have fire-fighting materials available: dry powder, fire extinguisher, heavy tarp or blanket, and water.

## If fire strikes

- If there is a fire — evacuate. Do not go back inside. Call 9-1-1 from a neighbor's house.
- Never use water on an electrical fire.
- Smother oil and grease fires in the kitchen with baking soda or salt, or put a lid over the flame if it is burning in a pan.
- If caught in smoke — drop to your hands and knees and crawl; breathe shallowly through your nose and use your blouse, shirt or jacket as a filter.
- If you must move through flames — hold your breath, move quickly, cover your head and hair, keep your head down and close your eyes as much as possible.
- If your clothes catch fire, “stop, drop and roll” until the fire is out.
- If you are in a room and cannot escape, leave the door closed, stay low to the floor and hang a white or light-colored sheet outside the window.
- Be sure all family members are accounted for. If someone is missing, let the fire department know.



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