

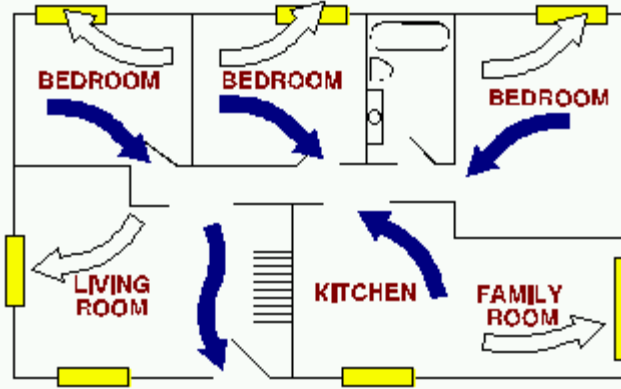
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EDITH – Exit Drills In The Home



In 2000, approximately 4,000 Americans died in home fires ... tens of thousands more were injured. You can survive even a major fire in your home *if* you are alerted early enough about the fire and can get out of your home quickly ... **AND STAY OUT!**

HOW YOU CAN SURVIVE

- Install and maintain working Smoke Detectors in your home
- Make an escape plan and practice it

YOU HAVE TO PLAN YOUR ESCAPE

When a fire happens, there is no time for planning. Sit down with your family now and make a step-by-step plan for escaping from a fire in your home. Some people might think ... "Gee, that's silly. I've lived in this house for 10 years ... I know my way around. If there's a fire I can get out." Well, it doesn't work that way. When a fire happens, especially at night, you will be groggy ... you will be afraid ... you will be confused, even in your own home. You might not get out. If you don't have working Smoke Detectors, your chances of surviving a fire in your home, especially at night dramatically decrease. That's how many people are killed and injured.

Draw a floor plan of your home and mark 2 ways out of every room, especially the bedrooms. Go over these escape routes with every member of your household.

Agree on a meeting place outside your house where every member of the household will meet after escaping a fire and wait there for the fire department to arrive. This lets

you count heads to make sure everyone is there, and to tell the fire department if anyone is missing.

Practice your escape plan at least a couple times a year. Hold a fire drill in your home. Appoint someone to be a monitor and have everyone take part in the drill. A fire drill is not a race, but practice to get out quickly ... remember to be careful.

Make your fire drill realistic ... pretend that some exits are blocked by fire and practice getting out different escape routes. Pretend that the lights are out and that some escape routes are getting smoke in them.

Be Prepared ... make sure everyone in the house can unlock all the doors and windows quickly, even in the dark. Windows or doors with security bars on them need to be equipped with quick-release devices and everyone in the house should know how to use them.

If you live in an apartment building use stairways to escape. Never use an elevator during a fire ... it can stop between floors or take you directly to a floor where a fire is burning (you know those little buttons ... the ones that light up when you touch them to call an elevator to where you are waiting ... they are activated by the **heat** coming from your finger ... the same kind of **heat** that a fire gives off and touches those little buttons on the floor where a fire is burning).

If you live in a two story house and you must escape from a second floor window, be sure there is a safe way to reach the ground. Make special arrangements for kids, older adults, and people with disabilities. People who might have trouble moving should have a telephone they can easily get to in their bedroom, and if possible, should sleep on the ground level floor.

Test doors before opening them ... while kneeling or crouching at the door, reach up as high as you can and with the **back** of your hand (it's more sensitive than the front of your hand to feel things such as heat), touch the door, the doorknob, and the space between the door and its frame. If the door is **hot**, use another way out. If the door is **cool**, open it **slowly**.

If you are trapped, close all doors between you and the fire. Stuff the cracks around the doors with clothes or anything to help keep the smoke out of the room you are in. Wait at a window and signal for help with a light colored cloth (use a pillow case, sheet, anything light colored) or a flashlight if you have one. If there is a phone in the room, call the fire department and tell them exactly where you are.

GET OUT FAST ...

In case of fire, do not stop for anything. Do not try to rescue anything, including pets. After you get out, go directly to your meeting place and then call for the fire department from a neighbor's home (or use an alarm box if there is one nearby). Every member of

your household should know how to call the fire department (911 in most, but not all areas).

Crawl low under smoke. Smoke contains deadly gases and heat rises. During a fire the cleaner air will be down near the floor. If you find smoke when using your primary exit (your 1st way out), then use your alternate escape plan (2nd way out). If you must get out of the house through smoke, get down and crawl on your hands and knees ... even down on your belly if you have to ... and keep your head close to the floor where the "good" air is so you can breathe easier (and its not as hot down there).

... AND STAY OUT ... once you are out of the house, **DO NOT** go back in for any reason. If people are trapped, the firefighters have the best chance of rescuing them. Firefighters have the training, experience, and the protective clothing and equipment needed to enter a burning building. Most of the time, those people that go back into a house that is burning do not come back out alive. *Remember*, we can replace toys and TV's and clothes ... but we can **NEVER** replace **YOU!**

DON'T BE STUPID ... More than half of all fatal home fires happen at night while people are sleeping. One of the first body senses to go to sleep is that of smell. Working Smoke Detectors act like a big nose smelling the air all night for you. If a fire starts, the Smoke Detectors will sound an alarm alerting you before you can become trapped or overcome by smoke. With working Smoke Detectors, your risk of dying in a home fire is cut almost in half. Install Smoke Detectors outside of every bedroom and on every level of your home including the basement. Follow the installation instructions carefully and **test** all of the Smoke Detectors at least once every week. Change Smoke Detector batteries at least once every year ... a good idea is to change the batteries on a certain birthday each year.