

Think Safe, Be Safe

Create a Fire Escape Plan



Fire is a leading cause of preventable deaths in the home; but by being ready to handle this emergency, you can help your family safely exit your home in the event of a fire. In the year studied, *The State of Home Safety in America™ Report (2004)* found that only 54 percent of families with children have discussed what to do in case of a home fire. The Home Safety Council suggests these guidelines for making a home fire escape plan:

- Draw an escape plan on paper. Talk with your family about the best ways to get outside quickly. Post it where everyone can see it.
- If you have a two- or three-story home, decide if you need to buy fire escape ladders for upstairs bedrooms. If so, they should be part of your fire drill, used safely from a ground-floor window for practice.
- Find two escape routes from each room and mark them clearly on the plan.
- Mark the location of each smoke alarm installed in your home.
- Make sure that family members with special needs, such as older adults or small children, have a buddy to help them get out safely.
- Find a place to meet outside, in front of your home, where you will wait for the fire department. Mark this place on your plan and make sure everyone knows to go there immediately if fire starts.
- In a fire emergency, escape first and call the fire department from outside, or from a neighbor's phone.
- Practice makes perfect. Hold family fire drills often and at different times until the escape plans become routine.

Safety Assignment:

- Download a fire escape plan template from www.homesafetycouncil.org.
- Test all your smoke alarms monthly to be sure they are working. If not, replace 9-volt batteries with new ones. (Lithium-powered, long-life smoke alarms have non-removable batteries and are typically good for 8-10 years.)
- Create your own fire escape plan and practice it with everyone in your home.
- If you live in an apartment building, ask your fire department to hold a fire drill to help you and your neighbors practice the escape plan for your building.

For more information about fire safety, please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org

Think Safe, Be Safe

Install Smoke Alarms



Home Safety Council research shows that 97 percent of American homes have at least one smoke alarm, but one may not be enough. Do you have enough smoke alarms in your home? Are they correctly installed? To make sure your family will be alerted to a fire, use these guidelines when installing smoke alarms:

- Install a UL-listed smoke alarm on every level of your home, including the basement. Make sure there is an alarm near every sleeping area.
- The Home Safety Council suggests installing smoke alarms inside all bedrooms.
- If anyone has a hearing impairment, buy special smoke alarms that use strobes and/or movement to signal a fire.
- Smoke rises, so smoke alarms should be placed high on walls or ceilings.
- Do not install smoke alarms near windows, doors, or ducts where drafts might affect their operation.
- Test your smoke alarms at least once a month, using the instructions, which often means pushing the “test” button on the face of the alarm cover. Install fresh 9-volt batteries at least once a year or if the alarm makes a chirping sound.
- The Home Safety Council suggests using interconnected smoke alarms with battery back-up when possible. These alarms connect to your household wiring or use wireless technology, and are tied in together so that if one alarm sounds, they all signal.
- All smoke alarms should be replaced at least once every 10 years.

Safety Assignment:

- If you have smoke alarms that are older than 10 years replace them with new units.
- Check the smoke alarms in your home and install more alarms as needed.
- Replace any dead 9-volt batteries in your smoke alarms.
- Remember that interconnected smoke alarms should have fresh back-up batteries installed too.

For additional fire safety advice and smoke alarm installation details, please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org.

Think Safe, Be Safe

Have a Family Fire Drill



The Home Safety Council's *State of Home Safety in America™ Report (2004)* found that only 54 percent of homes with young children have talked about a family fire escape plan. Parents must know ahead of time how their children will react during a fire. If children cannot wake up to the smoke alarm signal, parents need to have a back-up plan. Responding immediately and knowing how to get out quickly can help your family survive if a fire occurs. The Home Safety Council suggests holding a family fire drill at least twice each year using these guidelines:

- Walk through your plan together.
- Identify and correct obstacles to a safe and quick escape, such as locks that will not open and upstairs bedrooms that may need fire escape ladders.
- Keyed deadbolt locks are a danger if a fire happens. In an emergency, you may not be able to find where you put the key and could be trapped inside. Keyless deadbolts will help you escape quickly.
- Push the test button on the smoke alarm so everyone in your household knows the sound your smoke alarms make.
- Be sure to hold at least one drill when the rest of your family is sleeping so you can determine if anyone has difficulty waking to the sound of the alarm. Children may not wake up to the sound of a smoke alarm; if not, they will need help during drills and in a fire.
- Practice using all your escape routes, so you'll know what to do if one way out is blocked by smoke or fire.
- Practice what it would be like to escape through smoke by crawling below the smoke to the nearest exit.

Safety Assignment:

- Plan a family fire drill.
- If windows or doors in your home have security bars, make sure that the bars have a quick-release function inside so that they can be opened quickly if you need to escape.
- Make sure your house or building address number is large and visible from the street so firefighters can easily find your home.

For more information about organizing a family fire drill, please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org.

Think Safe, Be Safe

Small Kitchen Fires



Home Safety Council research found that fires and burns are the third leading cause of unintentional home injury-related death. Most home fires begin in the kitchen, and are most often due to careless behavior while cooking. Always keep basic fire safety in mind while cooking:

- Stay in the kitchen while cooking. If you must leave the kitchen briefly, turn down the heat on the stove and return to the kitchen quickly.
- Keep items that can catch fire, such as paper or plastic bags, dishtowels or curtains, at least three feet away from the stove top.
- Do not wear loose-fitting clothes when cooking.
- Soak cigarette and cigar butts before dumping them in the trash.
- Think about buying and learning how to use a multipurpose UL-listed fire extinguisher for small fires, such as in a trashcan.

Safety Assignment:

- Learn how to put out a small pan fire: Wear a heavy oven mitt and slide a lid over the pan. Then turn off the heat. Keep the lid on until the pan is completely cool to the touch.
- Ask your fire department how you can learn where to install and how, when and if it's safe to use a fire extinguisher. (HSC recommends that only adults use fire extinguishers.)

For more information about fire prevention and kitchen safety, please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org.

Think Safe, Be Safe

How and When to Use a Fire Extinguisher



Home Safety Council's *State of Home Safety in America™ Report (2004)* names fires as the third leading cause of unintentional home injury-related death. While small fire extinguishers are not designed or meant to fight a large or spreading fire, knowing how to use a portable fire extinguisher may help if a small fire happens. A small fire extinguisher can help you to control a small fire until help arrives. The Home Safety Council recommends formal training, such as that provided by the fire department, and suggests these guidelines for using a fire extinguisher at home:

- Only use a fire extinguisher if you have learned how to use it, and if you know it is safe for the type of fire you want to fight.
- Before trying to fight a fire, always call 911 or your local fire department emergency number.
- Make sure others have left the home.
- Find a clear exit and don't let the fire block your escape route.
- When using a fire extinguisher, use the PASS system, which is marked on the product label:
 - Pull the pin out to unlock the lever
 - Aim low: point the extinguisher nozzle (or hose) at the base of the fire.
 - Squeeze the lever below the handle to release the chemicals.
 - Sweep from side to side, moving toward the fire. Keep the extinguisher aimed at the base of the fire and sweep back and forth until the flames are out. Watch the fire area. If it flares up, repeat the process.
- If the fire doesn't die down, stop attempting to fight the fire and escape
- The fire department must inspect the fire area, even if you think you have extinguished it. Fire can remain hidden and rekindle later, so it is important for firefighters to check it out.

Safety Assignment:

- Learn about household fire extinguisher types and their uses.
- Contact your local fire department to learn how the adults in your family can learn how to select, install and purchase a household fire extinguisher.

For more information about fire safety, please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org.

Think Safe, Be Safe

Scald Prevention



Young children are at high risk for scald injuries. Scalds are injuries caused by hot liquids or steam. Home Safety Council research found that most scalds happen in the kitchen or dining room. The Home Safety Council offers these guidelines to help avoid scalds at home:

- Constantly watch young children when they are in or around water. When washing, turn the cold tap on first, then add warm water.
- Turn pot handles inward on stoves and tables so small children cannot reach up and pull down a hot pan.
- Keep hot items, such as hot drinks and trays, out of children's reach.
- Food cooked in a microwave can be very hot. Remove the lids or other coverings from microwaved food carefully to prevent steam burns.
- Use travel mugs with a tight lid for coffee, tea or other hot drinks.
- For safe water temperatures to prevent burns and scalds from hot tap water, keep your hot water heater set at 120 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

Safety Assignment:

- Keep all hot items out of children's reach.
- Check your water heater temperature.
- Make sure you have plenty of oven mitts and hot pads in the kitchen and wear them.

For more information about fire safety, please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org.



A safe home is in your hands.

Think Safe, Be Safe **Children and Fire Safety**



Home Safety Council research shows that fires and burns are the leading cause of unintentional home injury deaths for children ages 1-14. Matches, lighters or other fire sources can be of interest to young children, but these pose a severe danger to them and your entire family. To reduce the chance of fireplay, the Home Safety Council suggests these safe steps:

- Store matches and lighters locked up and out of children's reach.
- Never leave children alone near a candle or any open flame.
- Use only child resistant lighters at home.
- Teach your children about fire dangers and always use fire tools safely.
- Remind guests not to leave matches or lighters in pants pockets, purses, or drawers, where young children could find them.

Safety Assignment:

- Talk to your children about fire dangers. Without using scare tactics, help them understand they must not play with fire.
- Find all matches, lighters and other fire sources and lock them away from children.

For more information about fire prevention and child safety, please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org.

Think Safe, Be Safe

Grilling Safety



Grilling is a fun summer past time, but it's not without danger. The Home Safety Council reports that fires and burns are one of the leading causes of unintentional injuries at home. So to make sure your next barbecue does not go up in flames, follow these safety guidelines:

- Make the space near the grill a “No Play Zone,” keeping kids and pets well away until the grill is cool (this could be overnight).
- Before using it, place your grill at least 3 feet away from other objects, the house and any shrubs or bushes.
- Only use starter fluid made for grills when starting a fire in a charcoal grill. Never add starter fluid once you've lit the grill.
- Before using a gas grill, check the connection between the propane tank and the fuel line to be sure it is working and not leaking.
- Never use a match to check for leaks. If you find a leak, quickly turn off the gas and do not light the grill again until the leak has been fixed.
- Due to the hazard of carbon monoxide exposure and the fire danger, never bring a grill indoors, or into any enclosed space.

Safety Assignment:

- Check your grill placement and gas connection before using it.
- Make sure you have full-length oven mitts that cover the hand and forearm.

To learn more about grilling and summer safety, please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org.

Think Safe, Be Safe

Safety with Candles



Candles can provide a warm and festive setting for any event - but they can also be a fire hazard if left alone or placed near flammable items. Families can enjoy the warm and inviting nature of candles and also avoid injury by keeping fire safety advice from the Home Safety Council in mind:

- Never leave burning candles alone.
- Blow out all candles before going to sleep or leaving the room.
- Keep candles at least three feet away from items that can burn, such as other decorations and wrapping paper.
- Always use stable, nonflammable candle holders.
- If you have children in your home, store candles, matches and lighters out of their sight and reach.
- Do not permit children to use or keep candles in their rooms.
- If your home loses power, use flashlights instead of candles

Safety Assignment:

- Pick up any matches and lighters and store them out of the reach of children, ideally locked up.
- Check to be sure you have flashlights and fresh batteries at home.

To learn more about candle safety, please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org

Think Safe, Be Safe
Change your Clock/Change your Battery



Daylight savings time happens on Sunday, November 4th – don't forget to change your clocks back! It is also the perfect time to test the smoke alarms in your home and replace the batteries. Home Safety Council research found that only 20 percent of families test their smoke alarms at least on a regular basis. Every home must have at least one smoke alarm on each level. Follow these simple steps to make sure that smoke alarms are working:

- Test your smoke alarms at least once a month, using the instructions, which often means pushing the “test” button on the face of the alarm cover.
- Test your smoke alarms when you return from a long vacation or trip, in case the battery power died during while you were away from home.
- Replace the batteries in your smoke alarms once a year, or as soon as the alarm “chirps,” warning that the battery is low.
- Lithium-powered, long-life smoke alarms have non-removable batteries and are typically good for 8-10 years.
- Remember that interconnected smoke alarms should have fresh back-up batteries installed too.
- Smoke alarms do not last forever. Replace your smoke alarms once every 10 years.

Safety Assignment:

- Test all of the smoke alarms in your home and replace 9-volt batteries if needed.

For more information on fire safety and smoke alarms, please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org.

Think Safe, Be Safe

Home Fire Sprinkler Protection



Every home needs early warning if there is a fire. The sound of the smoke alarm provides extra time to follow your escape plan and get out safely. For more fire protection, the Home Safety Council suggests installing home fire sprinkler systems, which put water on a fire in its early stages. If you are moving into an apartment, choose a building with fire sprinklers. If you are going to remodel your home or are planning to build a new home, consider installing a sprinkler system. Review these facts about fire sprinklers and learn more about having them installed in your home.

- Sprinklers react quickly, when a fire is still small. The spray of water stops or contains the fire and slows the spread of smoke, giving your family more time to safely escape.
- While their main role is to save lives, sprinklers also protect property.
- Sprinklers do not respond to smoke; they respond to the high temperature of a fire.
- Sprinklers operate individually. Usually only one sprinkler is needed to control a home fire.
- Sprinklers put far less water on a fire than fire hoses do – about 1/10th the amount.
- Sprinklers react while fires are still small, limiting the fire and smoke damage at home.

Safety Assignment:

- Investigate home fire sprinkler system options.

For more information on home fire sprinkler protection and fire safety, please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org.