

Home Safety Council and the Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View Fire Department Want to Help You Develop a Fire Escape Plan

Fire is a leading cause of preventable deaths in the home; but by being prepared to handle this emergency, you can help your family safely exit your home in the event of a fire. Fire safety and survival begins with everyone in your household being prepared. In the year studied, The State of Home Safety in America™ report found that only **54 percent of families with children have discussed what to do in case of a home fire.**

- Have smoke alarms on every level of your home. Make sure a smoke alarm is inside and near every bedroom in the hall. For the best detection and notification protection, install both ionization- and photoelectric-type smoke alarms. Some models provide dual coverage. The type will be printed on the box or package.
- Test each smoke alarm every month. Push the test button until you hear a loud noise.
- Make a fire escape plan for your family. Sketch out a floor plan of your home, including all rooms, windows, interior and exterior doors, stairways, fire escapes and smoke alarms. Make sure that every family member familiar with the layout.
- Make sure windows and doorways open easily. Make sure stair and doorways are never blocked. Look for things that could slow down your escape. Move or fix them.
- If you have security bars on doors and windows, have a “quick-release” latch. This makes it easy to get outside in an emergency. Make sure everyone in your family knows how to use the latch.
- Find two ways out of every room – the door and maybe the window. You might need an escape ladder to get out of upstairs bedroom windows. If so, they should be part of your fire drill, deployed safely from a ground-floor window for practice.
- Select two escape routes from each room and mark them clearly on the plan.

- Children and older people will need help escaping a fire. Plan for this. Know who needs help and pick someone to help them. If anyone in the household has a hearing impairment, purchase special smoke alarms that use strobes and/or vibrations to signal a fire.
- Have a place to meet in front of your home. Use a portable phone or a neighbor's phone to call 911. Once you get out, stay out. Do not go back inside for any reason.
- Make copies of the escape plan sketches and post them in each room until everyone becomes familiar with them.
- Practice makes perfect. Every second counts during a real fire. Hold family fire drills frequently and at various times until the escape plans become second nature. Once you've mastered the escape process, hold a drill when family members are sleeping so you can test each family member's ability to waken and respond to the smoke alarm.
- Young children might sleep through the sound of the smoke alarm. Be prepared for a family member to wake children for fire drills and in a real emergency.