

Maryland State Firemen's Association

Fire Prevention and Life Safety Committee

TIP Sheet: FIRE DRILLS



FIRE DRILLS ... WHEN THE ALARM SOUNDS



Once the smoke alarm sounds, you may only have a few minutes to get to safety. Everyone needs to have a fire escape plan AND know what to do when the alarm sounds. Fire drills should be performed regularly and hazards should be identified and corrected to ensure everyone gets out.

Use these tips to help ensure your plan is up-to-date.

- *Go through your entire home, condo and apartment building with your family and look for means of quick escape. If possible, plan on at least two escape routes for each room. Make sure all doors and windows can be easily opened. Be sure there are no obstructions by these exits that could slow down your evacuation.*
- *Draft a floor plan of your home. Make sure that all exits are clearly marked, including doors and windows. If you have kids, ask them to help you draw up the escape plan.*
- *Make sure you have a smoke alarm on every level, and preferably one inside and outside each sleeping area. Smoke alarms should be tested once a month opt to purchase the 10 year sealed(battery) smoke alarms.*
- *Make sure everyone in the house wakes up when alarms go off. If anyone is not awakened by the smoke alarms, assign someone in the household to wake that person during a drill or in the event of an actual fire.*
- *Fire Escape Ladders: Before you need them Practice them.*
- *Choose a safe meeting place outside of your home. Use this place to meet up during drills and in the event of a real fire. Make sure the location is far enough from your home to avoid being harmed by the fire, but still close by. Pick a specific landmark, like a lamp post or a mailbox. Mark the location you select on your escape plan. Plan to keep cell phone with you. In the event of a real fire, you can use it to dial 911 after you have moved to a safe location.*
- *Make a plan for family members who need help. Very young children, elderly people, and people with limited mobility may need help getting out of the home during a drill or a real fire. Assign a member of the family to assist anyone who needs help.*
- *Conduct a fire drill twice a year. Regular practice will help your family feel prepared and calm in the event of a real fire emergency. Keep the drill as realistic as possible. Practice rolling out of bed and staying low to the floor to avoid inhaling "smoke." Close doors behind you to prevent the spread of smoke and fire.*
- *Conduct the drill at an unexpected time. Part of the purpose of the drill is to help everyone remain calm in the event of a real fire emergency, so it is important that the drills are not frightening for young children.*
- *Make sure everyone stays outside until the drill is over. In a real fire, it is crucial to stay outside until the fire has been put out. Instruct your family to remain at the designated meeting place until the drill has finished.*