

## **Prevention of Home Fires**

### **Protect:**

Some children are curious about fire. There are simple steps you can take to keep you and the people you love safer from fire and burns.

- **Keep children 3 feet away from anything that can get hot.** Space heaters and stove-tops can cause terrible burns. Keep children at least 3 feet away from stoves, heaters or anything that gets hot.
- **Keep smoking materials locked up in a high place.** Never leave cigarette lighters or matches where children can reach them.
- **Never play with lighters or matches when you are with your children.** Children may try to do the same things they see you do.

### **Prepare**

Have working smoke alarms on every level of your home. You should also have a smoke alarm inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas. The sooner you know there is a fire, the more time you have to escape.

### **Plan**

#### **Make an escape plan**

It is important to have a plan when there are children in the home. Children sometimes need help getting out of the house, and they may not know how to escape or what to do unless an adult shows them.

- **Have a plan for young children who cannot get outside by themselves.** You will need to wake babies and very young children and help them get out. In your plan, talk about who will help each child get out safely.
- **Know two ways out of every room.** It is important to find two ways out of every room in the house, in case one exit is blocked or dangerous to use.
- **Choose a meeting place outside the home.** Children should know what to do when they hear a smoke alarm and there is no adult around. Help them practice going to the outside meeting place. Teach them to never go back inside a building that is on fire.

## *10 Simple Steps to a Safer Home*

Is your home fire safe? Have you practiced what to do if ever there is a fire in your home? Do you have smoke detectors? Are they working? When was the last time you checked the batteries?

We know that nothing is more important to you than your family's safety. If you couldn't answer "yes" to the all of the questions above, then there are things you can do today that will assure you and your family sleep safer tonight. It easy! And even if you answered those questions correctly, check below to make sure you've done all you can.

Below are "**10 simple steps**" you can do today that will drastically improve the safety of your home, and assure that your family reacts correctly in the event of a fire.

- **Take fire safety seriously!** If you don't, your children won't!
- **Make your "Family Escape Plan."** Create a simple, easy to understand escape plan, include two exit routes from every room, and a safe meeting place outside your home (like a tree, telephone pole, or neighbor's home) where your family will gather once outside the home.
- **Practice fire safety!** Your children know that if they want to be good at something, they have to practice. Fire Safety is no difference. Take time to practice your family escape plan, making sure to have two exits from every room. Practice with your children several times, then allow them to do it by themselves to make sure that they fully understand what they should do if ever there's a fire.
- **Keep your home safe!** Fire safety is not a once-a-year exercise. It must be part of your daily focus. Just as important as knowing what to do in the event of a fire, it is just as important to take steps to assure a fire never starts, and if a fire does start, that your family will be alerted as quickly as possible.
- **Install Smoke Detectors!** Statistics show that more than half of all fire deaths occur in homes with no smoke alarms, and nearly three quarters of fire deaths occur in homes without alarms or with non-functioning alarms. By placing smoke detectors in your home, you can increase the chances that all of your family gets out safely by 40-50%!

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- a) **One in every room!** It's important that smoke detectors are located throughout your home, and most importantly, in every bedroom.
  - b) **Test them!** Make sure the batteries are good and that the smoke detector itself is in proper working condition. Test your smoke detectors once a month.
  - c) **Not sure? Replace them!** If your smoke detectors are older, or if you're not sure they are in proper working condition, think about changing them. Improvements to newer smoke detectors could provide a better level of protection to you and your family.
- **Change batteries twice a year!** Most fire safety personnel recommend changing the batteries within your smoke detectors twice year. It's a simple, yet powerful message, "Working smoke detectors save lives!" Can't remember the last time you changed the batteries? Why take a chance? Change them now!

- **Know that sound!** Make sure that all family members know and recognize the sound your smoke detectors make. An easy way to accomplish this is to make sure that you gather your family together each time you test your smoke detectors. The quicker you recognize that sound, the quicker you can react if ever there's a fire.
- **Keep a look-out for safety hazards in the home!** To many items plugged into one outlet, a shirt thrown over a lamp, a worn electrical cord; these are just a few examples of hazards within the home.
- **Be careful when cooking!** Make sure that young children never cook without proper supervision. And make sure to keep cooking surfaces clean to avoid grease fires. A majority of fires within the home begin in the kitchen.

**Every home should have a fire extinguisher!** Keep a fire extinguisher in a handy location. The best location is typically just inside a door or entrance, out of the reach of children. Avoid locating an extinguisher right next to where a fire could develop. Remember, a fire extinguisher is no substitute for the fire department, but it can be used to stop a small fire from getting out of control. Know how to use it! It's too late to learn once a fire has begun.

### ***Practice Safety as a Family***

Family "togetherness" will never be more important than in the event of a fire and your family is forced to escape from the home!

**A Family that practices together, escapes together!** In the event of a fire, all members of your family must react immediately if they are to have the best chance to escape unharmed. Preparing, **and practicing**, a *Family Escape Plan* will assure that all members of your family know what to do if ever faced with a fire within the home.

Below is an example of a family escape plan. Notice that it is simple and easy to understand. Children must be able to comprehend the information shown, so only include information that's necessary to accomplish this goal.

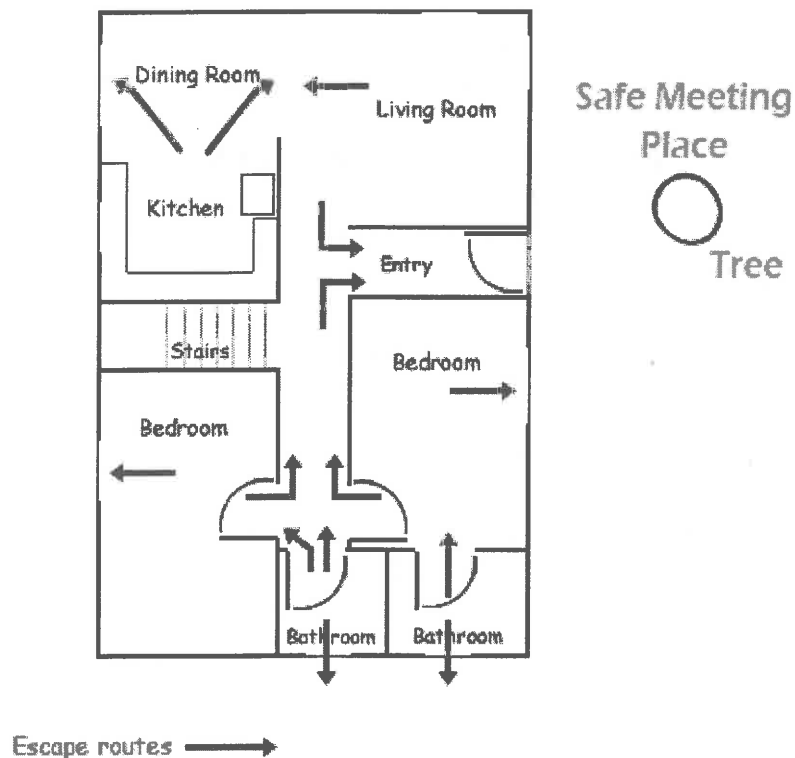
#### **What to included-**

- **Names of each room-** (kitchen, bath, master bedroom, girl's bedroom, Timmy's room, etc.)
- **Two exits from every room-** You should make every effort to include at least TWO escape routes from every room. In the event that fire blocks one exit route, a secondary exit becomes the difference between life and death. Your secondary, or *alternate*, exit can be another door or window. If using a window as a secondary exit, make sure the window is (1) easy for a child to open and (2) easy for a child to drop to the ground once outside. If the window is located on a second level, or high enough from the ground to make impossible to drop safely, think about the purchase of a safety ladder.
- **Safe Meeting Place-** A "Safe Meeting Place" is a designated location outside the home where your family will gather once outside the home.

Choose your meeting place with these thoughts in mind:

- d) **Proximity-** A safe meeting place should be close to the home, but not so close as to be in danger from the fire.
- e) **"Location, location, location"-** It's important that your safe meeting place is located in front of the house. It is very important that fire safety personnel easily see you as they arrive so (a) they will know you are out of the home, and (b) you will be able to quickly inform them if someone has not made it out of the house.
- f) **"X marks the spot!"-** Pick a safe meeting place that will be easy to find whether it is day or night. The best way to do this is by selecting a safe meeting place that is clearly marked by a **non-moving item**, such as a *telephone pole, tree* or *neighbor's front porch*. Do not use anything that may move, such as a car, and avoid picking a location that will place you in the way of emergency personnel or equipment.

- See the example below:



The best Family Escape Plan will mean very little if it's not practiced! Together as a family, you should practice escaping from a fire at least twice a year. Practice your escapes from all rooms of the house. At the same time, you should be practicing Fire Safety Basics, going over the concepts of fire safety, including staying low when there's smoke, getting out quickly, and once outside, staying outside.