



## BASIC FIRE SAFETY

- Does your home have enough [smoke alarms](#) and are the batteries charged? Make sure you have enough alarms installed throughout your home.
- Gather the kids around a smoke alarm and activate the test button. They should know what the alarm sounds like and understand that it's set off by a sensor that can detect smoke.
- Do your kids know the signs of a house fire? They might think a house has to be fully engulfed in flames in order to, "be on fire."
- Spending some time around a few safe campfires will teach kids what smoke smells like. This is a good opportunity to chat for a couple of minutes about smoke being a sign of a house fire. "Where there's smoke there's fire," isn't just an idiom. It's a good safety rule.
- Children have been known to sleep through the sound of fire alarms. Check out the voice alarms that will record your voice and a message telling kids to wake up and get out of the house.
- Kids need to understand that [smoke](#) presents the most urgent danger. Most fire deaths are a result of smoke inhalation, not burns. They should understand that smoke rises and the freshest air will be close to the floor.
- Every member of your [family](#) should know how to get outside from every room of the house. Do the kids know how to unlatch and open every window? Do they know to get out [immediately](#) from whatever room they happen to be in?
- Review a fire exit plan in a family meeting. Everyone should practice opening windows and even crawling to an exit. If the kids are willing, blindfold them for a more realistic experience.
- If a family member is disabled or very young, assign an older child or adult to help them in both a fire drill and in evacuating in case of a fire.
- Establish a single meeting place outdoors.
- Buy a small size fire extinguisher. Take the kids outside and have them practice activating and spraying the extinguisher.
- If there isn't a chance to call 911 from inside your home, assign someone ahead of time to make the call either from a cell phone, if they have it with them, or from a neighbor's house.
- It will be a child's natural instinct to want to rescue a family member, a pet, or a beloved toy. Impress upon them that once they are out of a burning building, they are to [never](#) go back inside no matter what.
- If you can safely rescue your pet(s), don't leave them behind! I have heard that dogs will bolt when frightened, but cats will hide. If you know your cat's favorite hiding places, check them out if there's time before you evacuate.
- Include pet evacuations in your fire drills.

- Call your nearest fire house and ask about pet rescue stickers for windows. Sometimes they're available for free.
- Have your [emergency kits](#), aka Bug Out Bags, packed and ready near a convenient exterior door. Depending on circumstances, you may not be able to access them, but it's better to have them ready to go than leave a burning house with nothing but the clothes on your back.
- Prepare in advance for a house fire by gathering together [important papers](#) and storing them either in a fireproof safe or in another secure location. I do not recommend the use of [safe deposit boxes](#), ever.
- Visit the website of [National Fire Protection Association](#) for more tips and downloads.