



Clermont County General Health District

Fact Sheet

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HOME FIRE SAFETY

How long do you have to escape from a fire in your home?

You may have much less time to escape than you think. A typical living room fire can threaten the entire house in just moments—producing life threatening conditions in nearby bedrooms less than two minutes after the smoke alarm sounds. Your family needs to know how to get out at the first sign of a home fire.

Don't wait, plan your escape today

Every family should have a fire escape plan. Include everyone in the planning process. Draw your plan, marking two ways out of every room including windows. Pick a meeting place outside, well away from the building. Tell everyone to meet there after escaping the house so you can count heads and tell the fire department if anyone is trapped inside. Do not forget to call the fire department from a safe location.

Practice your plan

Plans are great, but the only way to know if the plan works is to practice. Hold a home fire drill. Getting out of your own home sounds easy, but your home can look very different if it is full of smoke. Children in particular need to practice. Children practice drills at school, but rarely at home. But fires are far more likely to happen at home. Have someone press the button on the smoke alarm as the signal for the drill to start. Get out quickly, but carefully. Everyone should go to the meeting place.

HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST

Heating

- Baseboard heaters do not touch any furniture or curtains, or other items stored on the floor.
- Have your chimneys and heating systems inspected, cleaned and repaired prior to the heating season.
- All portable heaters are placed at least three feet from bedding, furniture, and other flammable materials.
- Every fireplace is equipped with a sturdy metal screen.

Electrical

- Use as few extension cords and plug adapters as possible.
- Extension cords used are not tacked to walls, run under rugs, or through doorways.
- Small appliances, like the toaster, are unplugged when not in use.

Housekeeping

- Matches and lighters are kept out of the reach of children in a secure place.
- Paint, varnish, and other flammables are stored in sturdy metal containers and in a cool place.
- Ashes from fireplaces and barbecues are only disposed of in metal containers.
- Candles are only lit when someone is able to keep an eye on them, and placed in sturdy holders away from things that can burn.

Kitchen

- The stove and oven are kept clean of grease.
- In the event of a grease fire, know that the best thing to do is to put a lid on it.
- Cooking is never left unattended.
- The oven is never used to heat the home.

Smoking

- Matches, lighters, and smoking materials are kept out of the reach of small children.
- "No Smoking In Bed" is a house rule.

Smoke Alarms

- Smoke alarms are installed on a ceiling or high on the wall outside of the bedrooms on each level of the home.
- Smoke alarm batteries are changed once a year.
- Smoke alarms are tested and cleaned regularly.

Escape Plan

- Have a plan of escape showing two ways out of every room in your home, especially bedrooms.
- Regularly practice your escape plan by holding fire drills in your home.
- Windows used for escaping can be opened easily.
- House numbers are clearly visible from the street.

Tips for a safe escape

- If you see smoke, try another way out. If you can't avoid the smoke, crawl under it on your hands and knees.
- Test doors before you open them. If you touch the door and it is warm, use another escape route. If the door is cool, open it cautiously.
- Do security bars on windows have quick-release devices? Bars need to be opened easily and quickly from the inside by everyone in the household. Make sure to practice opening them.
- Don't stop or go back for anything. Possessions can be replaced. You can't.
- Remember fire spreads quickly. Get out fast and stay out. Call the fire department as quickly as possible.

SMOKE ALARMS

Count your smoke alarms

You should install at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home, including one in every bedroom.

Check your smoke alarms

Press the test button on smoke alarms each month to make certain they are still working.

Vacuum your smoke alarms

Clean smoke alarms each month of dust and cobwebs to keep them sensitive.

Change your batteries

Change smoke alarm batteries at least once a year, or as soon as the alarm "chirps" warning that the battery is low. The Seattle Fire Department suggests changing batteries in the fall when clocks are changed from Daylight Savings Time.

Change your alarm

Replace smoke alarms once every ten years.

Know the sound

Make sure everyone in the home can hear and recognize the sound of the smoke alarm and knows how to react immediately. Assistive devices are available for those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Fire Extinguishers

Properly operated, fire extinguishers can help stop a small fire before it has a chance to grow out of control. Home fire extinguishers can be purchased from a hardware or home improvement store. A multipurpose, ABC dry chemical extinguisher is the recommended model.

Remember the P.A.S.S. word

There are four basic steps to using a fire extinguisher.

Pull Pull the safety pin by grabbing the ring and twisting.

Aim Aim the hose at the base of the fire.

Squeeze Squeeze the handle.

Sweep Sweep the hose from side to side while discharging and **Get Out!** If the fire gets bigger, close the door to slow the spread of heat and smoke and evacuate.

Be prepared

Training and practice are the best ways to prepare for emergencies. Make certain you know the P.A.S.S. system and understand how to safely use a fire extinguisher before the need ever arises.

- Don't force yourself to fight a fire that makes you uncomfortable or puts you at risk.
- Always let someone know and make certain 911 has been called before using an extinguisher on a fire.
- Fire extinguishers are small quick fixes. If you are unable to put out the fire with one extinguisher, leave and close the door behind you.
- Don't let the fire come between you and your exit. Keep your back to the exit and the fire in front of you.