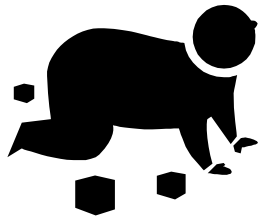


*Clear up misconceptions.* The smoke is poisonous and the fire moves fast. Children may want to hide from the fire—and the fireman—rather than leave the burning house.

*Plan two escape routes.* If one route is blocked, the other can lead you to safety. Each route should end at the designated meeting place for the family, a safe distance from the house.

*Learn the fire safety crawl.* Stay low, where it's cool. Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth to block poisonous fumes. Touch doors to see if they are hot before opening. Don't stop to call the fire department or gather valuables.

*Practice.* Practice regularly at night, in the dark. Try both escape routes.



- Remember—Once you are out of the burning building, stay out. If someone is missing, tell a firefighter.



Developed for local Kiwanis clubs by  
Kiwanis International  
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# Fire

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**A  
FAMILY  
KILLER**

**A safety brochure  
distributed by your local  
Kiwanis club**

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## A Race for Your Life

Your house catches on fire in the middle of the night. Could you get your family out of the house in two minutes? That might be all the time you have before flames engulf your house.

That's why it's so important to have a working smoke detector and a plan for leaving your house. Getting out of the house a few seconds earlier could save your entire family.

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## Myths and Fires

A real home fire is nothing like the Hollywood version where the hero saves his family. In a real fire, the biggest danger isn't getting burned; three times as many people die from breathing poisonous smoke as from burns.

*The smoke isn't white.* It's black, choking, and so thick it can disorient you in your own home.

*The air isn't breathable.* Poison gases and a lack of oxygen make it difficult to breathe.

*Smoke doesn't wake you up.* The carbon monoxide and other toxic gases kill people in their sleep.

*Fire isn't orderly.* Rooms become so hot that everything will burst into flames in a sudden flash.

*Fire isn't slow.* In just 30 seconds, a small flame can turn into a big fire. An entire house can be engulfed in just five minutes.

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## How to Survive

There are three simple steps you should take to prepare for a fire in your home:

- **Install smoke detectors.**

A working smoke detector cuts in half the chances of dying in a fire.

*Place the first smoke detector in the hallway outside the bedrooms.* Most fires occur between midnight and 6 a.m.

*Put a smoke detector on every level of the home near the stairs.* A

detector on every level provides up to three minutes to escape in most situations.

*Install detectors on ceilings or high walls.* Smoke rises, so place detectors high and close to the middle of the room, away from air vents.

- **Take care of your smoke detectors.**

A detector can't save your life if it doesn't work.

*Test the battery once a month.* Most have a test button you can push. Otherwise, read the manufacturer's directions.

*Clean the detector.* Dust and other dirt can lead to false alarms and other problems. Use a soft duster or a vacuum cleaner once a month.

*Replace the battery.* For maximum effectiveness, replace the battery at least once each year.

- **Prepare your family.**

Everyone needs to know what to do if a fire occurs. The safe response should be a reflex.

