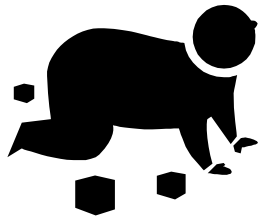


*Clear up misconceptions.* The smoke is poisonous and the fire moves fast. Children may want to hide from the fire—and the fireman—rather than leave the burning house.

*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.



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Kiwanis International  
3636 Woodview Trace,  
Indianapolis, IN 46268

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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.



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## Practice escaping

Practice regularly, using the fire drills as an opportunity to test the smoke detectors. Alternate the exit used so the children learn both routes.

- Don't warn the children. See how they react, and keep practicing until their instinctive reaction is the safe one.
- Practice at night. That's when most residential fires happen. It's dark and the smoke makes it worse. Conduct the fire drill in the dark.



The information in this brochure was provided by the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, Washington, D.C.



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# Protect Your Children

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**Fires Kill  
Children. . .  
Don't Let  
Yours  
Become  
Victims!**

Burns are the second leading cause of unintentional injury among children in this country. And more than 65 percent of the children who die are five years of age or younger.

The most important action to protect your children is to install at least one smoke detector in your home. But that's only half the job.

The second step is to educate them. Here are some tips:

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## **Clear up the misconceptions**

Many children hide in closets or under beds and think they are safe. Some try to put out the fire themselves. Others fear being blamed, so they don't tell adults until it is too late. Explain that none of those actions are safe.

The sounds of smoke detectors and sirens scare young children, and a fireman in full gear can look like a monster. Listen to the alarms together and visit the fire station to see how firemen dress.

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## **Plan two escape routes**

Work with your children to find two exits they can use by themselves and make sure they understand that:

- *They must learn to use the escape routes by themselves. You may not be able to lead them.*
- *The escape routes end at the designated meeting place. That is the safe place where the family will meet.*
- *They must stay at the designated meeting place. Never go back into a burning building.*

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## **Learn the fire safety crawl**

Explain the four parts of the fire safety crawl and why they should do them.

- *Crawl, keeping low to the floor. The coolest air is near the floor. Four feet up, the temperature can be 600 degrees Fahrenheit.*
- *Cover your nose and mouth. Clothing or a towel (preferably damp) will protect lungs from dangerous fumes.*
- *Go directly to the nearest exit. Taking time to call the fire department or collect valuables could trap you in the fire.*
- *Touch doors before opening. If the door is hot, the fire is on the other side, and shouldn't be opened*