

# Fire Escape Plans



## ESCAPE AND ACTION PLANS

### PLANNING AN ESCAPE ROUTE

Fire can develop and spread quickly through a home, producing heat and large amounts of dense smoke and fumes. The occupants only have minutes to escape and that escape will be even more difficult at night when people are asleep and it is dark. Escaping is a lot easier if you have a planned an escape route and if each family member knows where to go and what to do.

Before you go to bed, check that:

- You have put spark guards around open fires.
- You have extinguished smokers' materials and emptied ashtrays into a bin outside the house.
- You have switched off all electrical equipment that is not designed to be left on over night, and that you have removed the plugs from sockets without switches.
- You have closed all doors that open onto the escape route.
- Your exit routes are free from obstructions – beware of toys left on the stairs and objects blocking the hallways.
- You have turned off all portable heaters.
- All electrical appliances in children's rooms have been switched off.

- The key to the final exit door is easily accessible, preferably near to the door in a place everybody knows.
- The key(s) to security locks on windows are readily available.

### WHAT TO DO IF A FIRE STARTS

When the escape route can be used, you should:

- Remain calm
- Do NOT investigate the fire.
- Alert everyone in the house.
- Get everyone out of the building quickly.
- Do not stop to get dressed or pick up valuables – this wastes time.
- Close the door of the room where the fire is to restrict the spread of the smoke and flames.
- Only open those doors that are necessary for escape.
- Telephone for the fire brigade from a neighbours home, public telephone box or mobile telephone.

Do NOT go back into the home for any reason!

The message is always:

- GET OUT
- GET THE FIRE BRIGADE
- STAY OUT

When the escape route cannot be used

You should:

- Remain calm.
- Alert everyone in the house.
- Gather people in the safest room furthest away from the fire, if possible in one with a window and with a telephone.
- Close the door.
- Pack towels, pillows, bed covers or clothes around the bottom of the door and keep the smoke out. The closed door should hold the fire back for 20 minutes.
- Telephone for the fire brigade.
- Open the window, shout 'FIRE' to attract attention and stay as close to this window as possible.
- If smoke enters the room, stay low with your nose near to the floor where the air is fresher.

As a last resort:

- Although it is natural to panic in such circumstances, try not to.
- Prevent the person from running about as this makes the fire worse.
- Get them down onto the floor quickly. This restricts the fire from spreading and reduces the effects of the fire to the face and head.
- Quickly place heavy material over them, such as a coat or a blanket, and roll them over. If you do not have any material, make them roll anyway. This will smother the fire.

**Remember – STOP, DROP & ROLL**

### Calling the Fire Brigade.

Calling the fire brigade is straightforward.

- Dial 999 – these calls are free from any telephone.
- Do not call the local fire station direct. This may actually take longer: the number might be engaged, unobtainable or the crews may be attending another incident and unable to answer the call. You would also have to use coins in a payphone, which again wastes time.
- Stay calm and speak clearly. The person taking the call needs as much information as possible. Unclear messages waste time.
- Give the whole address of where the emergency is, including the town. The few extra moments are not wasted, as the fire brigade will come to the correct address straight away.
- Say what is on fire, for example, if it is a house, Bungalow, apartment block etc, and, if anyone is trapped in the building, what room they are in. This helps the crew to plan their actions.

When you have made the call, wait somewhere safe, close the burning building.

When the fire brigade arrives give as much information as possible about the fire and the building to the fire officer in charge.

Remember – the 999 call system is only for emergencies.

Hoax calls waste valuable time and resources. They jeopardise responses to genuine emergencies – someone could die. They are also a risk to firefighters and the public because of the high risk of road accidents when driving at high speed.

