

# PREPARING TO ESCAPE A FIRE

You may have minutes or only seconds to escape a fire, you must be prepared and practice.

- How many levels
- Know the layout of the apartment building
- Locations of stair cases
- Nearest exits

In case it is dark, know the number of doors between the apartment door and the closest exit.

Be prepared to exit quickly once the alarm sounds:

- Prepare for the weather, have boots, hats, mittens, and coats in a place where they can be found
- Keep blankets in the vehicle. If you have a storage unit that is separate from the apartment, keep blankets and other necessities in the unit.

Always know where the keys to the apartment are so they are readily accessible. Try to take them with you

## IN THE EVENT OF FIRE

- Get everyone out
- Cannot get to your meeting place, follow your family emergency communication plan
- If closed doors or handles are warm or smoke blocks your primary escape route, use your second way out. Never open doors that are warm to the touch
- If smoke, heat or flames block your exit routes, stay in the room with doors closed
- If you must escape through smoke, get low and go crawl under the smoke to your exit. Close doors behind you
- Once outside, go to your meeting place and then send one person to call the fire department
- Open a window and wave a brightly colored cloth or flashlight to signal while yelling for help
- Place a wet towel under the door and call the fire department or **911** report what unit number you are in

- Remember to **GET OUT, STAY OUT** and call **911** or your local emergency phone number
- Use the safest and most accessible exit
- Yell "**FIRE!**" several times and go outside right away. If you live in a building with elevators, use the stairs. Leave all your things where they are and save yourself

## EVACUATING PETS

Decide now where you and your family will stay if local officials call for an evacuation. Many hotels or shelters may not allow pets. Prepare an emergency kit for each pet in a waterproof, easy-to-carry container. Pets should **NOT** be left behind in an evacuation; however, if the building is on fire leave pets and get out.

If you own a vehicle use this check list:

- Clean-up supplies: paper towels, newspaper, kitty litter with pan and scoop for cats, sealable bags for disposing of waste, wet and dry wipes and hand sanitizers
- Muzzle (Anxiety and stress can cause a pet to bite. A muzzle helps to protect the pet and people)
- One week's worth of food and water for each pet, including dishes, spoon and a can opener
- Pet toys, bedding and treats
- Secure pet carrier, cage or crate, plus leash and collar or harness for each pet
- Up-to-date identification tag on your pet's collar and proof of ownership, such as a picture of you with your pet
- Veterinary records and medications, such as flea or heartworm treatment, along with emergency contact information
- Written feeding and medication instructions, including what **NOT** to feed your pet



## City of Fall River Apartment Fire Safety Guide

This guide is to help our citizens stay safe living in an apartment, understanding the risks and creating a fire preparedness plan can save the life. Most apartment fires are caused by human error and as such are often preventable. Be prepared and stop a small accident from becoming a big disaster. Here's what you need to know to prevent, fight, and escape from apartment fires.

## HOW TO PREPARE ...

- Ensure that all household occupants know two ways to escape from every room of the home and know the family meeting spot outside of the home
- Establish a family emergency evacuation plan and ensure that all household occupants know where it is as well as a family communication plan
- Install the right number of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Test them once a month and replace the batteries twice a year
- Know how to safely operate a fire extinguisher
- Make sure everyone knows how to call **911**
- Practice escaping from the home at least twice a year. Press the smoke alarm test button or yell "Fire" to alert everyone that they must get out.
- Teach children what smoke alarms sound like and what to do when they hear one
- Teach household members to **STOP, DROP** and **ROLL** if their clothes should catch on fire



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Make It Here

# PREVENTING FIRE

## Smoke /Carbon Monoxide Detectors

- Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- Replace batteries twice a year
- Replace Smoke detectors older than 10 years and Carbon Monoxide Detectors older than 7 years
- Test once a month to check they are working

## Candles

- Blow out candles before leaving the room or going to sleep
- Keep candles in a sturdy holder and at least 1 foot from anything flammable

## Cooking Fires

- Don't leave unattended pots/pans on stovetop
- Don't attempt to move something that is on fire
- If the fire is spreading beyond the receptacle **OR** if you have **ANY** doubts about containing the fire, leave the building immediately and call **911**
- If the fire is still confined to a pan, slide a fitted lid over the flames to smother a grease or oil fire. Then turn off the stove and leave the lid on until the pan cools or use a fire extinguisher.
- Keep cooking surfaces clean to prevent food and grease build-up
- Keep dish towels, oven mitts, and other flammable items away from the stove
- Open a door or window if the alarm goes off from cooking. Do **NOT** disable smoke alarm
- Prevent spills and burns turn pan handles toward the back of the stove
- Shut oven door and turn off the stove to smother for oven fires
- Don't use water or flour on cooking fires. Some small fires may be smothered with baking soda

## Smoking Materials

- Dispose in a non-combustible container
- Fully extinguish smoking materials by immersing them in water (cigarettes, cigars, etc.)
- Keep matches and lighters away from children

## Heating Your Home

- Don't use oven or stovetop to heat apartment
- Keep flammable items and furniture at least 3 feet from space and portable heaters
- Never use portable generators indoors

## Prevent Electrical Fires

- Don't overload outlets or power strips with too many electrical devices
- Don't use extension cords with heat-producing appliances
- Plug in one heat-producing appliance (microwave, space heater, etc.) into a wall outlet at a time
- Unplug and Replace any frayed, cracked, or damaged wire

## Alternatives to keep you warm and safe

- Install heavy curtains near windows
- Install insulating film over windows
- Place draft-stoppers under doors

# PRACTICE ...

Have an Escape Plan and **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE**. You must practice with everyone that lives in the apartment.

- Once outside, go to your meeting place and then send one person to call the fire department
- Practice crawling low under the smoke
- Practice feeling the door and doorknob with the back of the hand. If the door is hot, don't open it. Use the second way out.
- Practice rolling out of bed
- Practice two ways out

## Fire Extinguishers

- Be familiar with use **BEFORE** fire starts. Remember **PASS**...**P**ull the pin, **A**im low at base of the fire, **S**queeze lever to discharge, **S**weep nozzle from side to side
- If fire is not spreading **AND** you are familiar with the proper use of fire extinguishers, you may then attempt to extinguish the fire. Know both your limits and the fire extinguisher's limits
- Keep your back to an unobstructed exit that is free from fire

# KNOW THE EXITS

- An elevator is never an acceptable means of exit during a fire
- Primary exit is the apartment door that leads into either an unenclosed (not separated by walls and doors) stairway or through a public hallway to an enclosed stairway that leads to the street
- Secondary exit should be one of the following, depending upon the building's date of construction that also leads directly or indirectly (through a yard) to the street level such as a back door, rear stairwell or a fire escape
- There must be two means of egress (exits) from the apartment building

# KEEP EXITS CLEAR & FUNCTIONING

Properly maintained fire doors and exits will largely increase the chance of escape during a fire.

- Check apartment door lock can be opened from inside with a thumb turn. (without use of a key)
- Keep stairways and outside fire escapes free of obstructions at all time. Don't store anything on or under stairways or on landings
- Maintain apartment door or doors leading into the public hall or vestibule as fireproof and self-closing. (tampering with the self-closing hinge or blocking the self-closing of such door is illegal).
- NEVER install an air conditioner in a window with a fire escape.

# STAY CALM ....

A building fire may lead to panic, particularly for those who are unprepared. If you develop an evacuation plan for fire emergencies, you'll be better equipped to stay calm in any fire, regardless of its size or severity.