

READY TOGETHER FOUNDATION
COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS RESOURCE LIBRARY

RTF-119

Home Fire Safety Guide

A Practical Guide to Preventing Home Fires and Protecting Your Family
Before, During, and After a Fire

Building Resilient Communities Together

Home Fires Can Spread in Minutes

A home fire can become life-threatening in just a few minutes. Smoke, heat, and flames can spread rapidly, making quick decisions critical.

Fortunately, many home fires can be prevented through awareness, safe habits, and planning.

Prepared families reduce risks before emergencies happen.

Why Home Fire Safety Matters

Preparing for home fires helps your family:

- Prevent fires before they start.
- Escape quickly and safely.
- Reduce injuries.
- Protect children, older adults, and pets.
- Recover more safely after a fire.

Fire safety begins with prevention.

Preventing Home Fires

Practice these fire-safe habits every day.

- ☐ Never leave cooking unattended.
- ☐ Keep flammable materials away from heat sources.
- ☐ Store matches and lighters out of children's reach.
- ☐ Avoid overloading electrical outlets.
- ☐ Replace damaged electrical cords.
- ☐ Use candles safely and never leave them unattended.
- ☐ Keep portable heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn.

Simple habits save lives.

Smoke Alarms Save Lives

Every home should have smoke alarms:

- ☐ Inside every bedroom.
- ☐ Outside sleeping areas.
- ☐ On every level of the home.

Test smoke alarms once a month.

Replace batteries as recommended.

Replace smoke alarms according to the manufacturer's guidance.

Fire Extinguishers

Keep at least one fire extinguisher in your home.

Know:

- ☐ Where it is located.
- ☐ What types of fires it is suitable for.
- ☐ How to use it safely.

Only attempt to extinguish a small fire if it is safe to do so.

If the fire is spreading, leave immediately.

Create a Home Fire Escape Plan

Every family should:

- ☐ Identify two exits from every room where possible.
- ☐ Choose a safe outdoor meeting place.
- ☐ Practice fire drills at least twice each year.
- ☐ Ensure everyone knows how to call 911.

Never re-enter a burning building.

If a Fire Starts

If you discover a fire:

- ☐ Alert everyone in the home.
- ☐ Leave immediately.
- ☐ Close doors behind you if possible.
- ☐ Crawl low under smoke if necessary.
- ☐ Meet at your designated meeting place.
- ☐ Call 911 from outside.

Your life is always more important than your belongings.

Kitchen Fire Safety

The kitchen is one of the most common places for home fires.

- ☐ Stay in the kitchen while cooking.
- ☐ Keep towels and paper products away from the stove.
- ☐ Turn pot handles inward.
- ☐ Keep a lid nearby to smother small grease fires.

Never use water on a grease fire.

Electrical Fire Safety

Reduce electrical fire risks by:

- ☐ Inspecting cords regularly.

- ☐ Avoiding overloaded outlets.
- ☐ Using extension cords only as temporary solutions.
- ☐ Having electrical work completed by qualified professionals when needed.

Electrical safety is fire safety.

Protecting Children

Teach children:

- ☐ What smoke alarms sound like.
- ☐ How to get outside quickly.
- ☐ Never to hide during a fire.
- ☐ Never to go back inside for toys or pets.

Practice helps children react with confidence.

Protecting Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities

Ensure they have:

- ☐ Accessible escape routes.
- ☐ Assistance if needed.
- ☐ Emergency contact information.
- ☐ Smoke alarms they can hear or feel.

Planning ahead helps everyone evacuate safely.

Caring for Pets

Include pets in your fire escape plan.

- ☐ Know where they usually hide.
- ☐ Keep leashes or carriers accessible.
- ☐ Practice evacuating with them.
- ☐ Never delay your own escape while searching for pets.

Inform firefighters if a pet remains inside.

After a Home Fire

When authorities say it is safe:

- ☐ Do not enter the home until it has been declared safe.
- ☐ Contact your insurance company.
- ☐ Document damage with photographs.
- ☐ Replace important documents if needed.
- ☐ Seek support from local disaster assistance organizations if necessary.

Recovery begins with safety and support.

Ready Together Action

Complete these three steps this week:

- ☐ Test every smoke alarm in your home.
- ☐ Check the location and condition of your fire extinguisher.
- ☐ Practice your family's fire escape plan.

Prepared families practice before emergencies happen.

Review Your Fire Safety Plan

Review your fire safety plan:

- ☐ Every six months.
- ☐ After moving.
- ☐ After home renovations.
- ☐ After changes in household members.

Preparedness is an ongoing commitment.

About Ready Together Foundation

Ready Together Foundation is dedicated to building resilient communities through emergency preparedness, emergency relief and response, youth engagement, and outreach to vulnerable populations.

Our work focuses on:

- Community Emergency Preparedness
- Emergency Relief & Response
- Youth Preparedness & Leadership
- Vulnerable Population Outreach

Together, we are building stronger, safer, and more resilient communities.

Ready Together Foundation

Building Resilient Communities Together

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Preparedness is a journey, not a one-time event. Every small step you take today helps protect the people you care about tomorrow.