

20. IT'S ALARMING

Preparing for a fire

WHY ACT?

On an average day in New York City the Fire Department responds to 74 structural fires – that adds up to over 27,000 each year. Fire is an emergency that can occur anytime, anywhere, and being prepared may make the difference between life and death. This action will prepare you for what to do in case of fire.

PREPAREDNESS ACTION

○ Prepare for a fire.

Step 1: Get a notebook and pen or pencil.

Step 2: If you live in an apartment building, find out if your building is fireproof or not and the evacuation procedure.

Step 3: Take a tour of your home and make note of any of the following items you'll need to purchase.

Step 4: Find your fire extinguishers. Check to make sure they are fully charged, A-B-C type (which can be used to put out most fires). If not, replace them with new, fully charged extinguishers. Make sure they are located in plain sight and easily accessible.

Step 5: Install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors with fresh batteries throughout your living area. Make sure they are appropriately located. Get in the habit of changing the batteries every spring and fall at the same time you change your clocks for daylight savings time.

Step 6: Check your home for fire hazards, such as frayed electrical wiring.

Step 7: Purchase any of the above items that are needed.

Step 8: Familiarize every member of your household with the location and use of your fire extinguishers. Together, review which types of fires can be put out with your extinguishers. Fire extinguishers are intended for small fires. Stress that a small fire can very quickly get out of control. If this happens, evacuate and call 911.

Step 9: With the other members of your household, develop or review fire evacuation procedures. Include a map (if appropriate) of your home that shows all of the rooms, doors and windows, with arrows marking escape routes from each room. Designate a place outside your home for the household to meet.

Step 10: Make sure windows are not nailed or painted shut, and that security gratings on windows have a fire safety-opening feature.

- Hold a fire drill for all members of your household and practice each of these elements:

Step 1: Teach children how to report a fire by calling 911.

Step 2: Practice escaping from each room, staying close to the floor.

Step 3: Teach family members how to escape through a closed door.

Feel the door with the back of your hand before you open it. If the door is hot, find another way out.

Step 4: If you are unable to get out, stay near a window and close to the floor. Close the door and stuff the bottom with a towel to block the smoke. If possible, signal for help by waving a cloth or sheet outside the window.

Step 5: If your clothes catch on fire; STOP where you are, DROP to the ground and ROLL over and over to smother the flames.

Step 6: If you are able to get out, close doors behind you. Do not stop to get anything.

Step 7: If you live in a fireproof building, and the fire is not in your apartment, stay where you are rather than entering into a smoke-filled hallway.

NOTE: See NYC.gov/FDNY for more information.

MATERIALS

Working smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers.

TIME

An hour to several hours to prepare your fire prevention equipment and practice your response.

RESILIENCY GAIN

The peace of mind gained by knowing what to do.