

Plan Your Escape

Plan Your Great Escape!

In a typical home fire, there may be as little as two minutes to escape from the time the smoke alarm sounds. A home fire escape plan helps people use those minutes wisely, and escape safely.

When the smoke alarm sounds, you need to react immediately and know exactly what to do, which takes planning and practice. To be fully prepared for a home fire:

- Make sure to have at least one smoke alarm on each level of the home and in or near each sleeping area. Test the alarms every month by pushing the test button, and replace the batteries once a year or when the alarm chirps, warning that the battery is low. (NOTE: Newer smoke alarms have a universal signal repetition pattern of three beeps, followed by a one and a half second pause.)

When entering other buildings, including other people's homes, observe or ask what type of emergency alarm system is in place. If it sounds, act immediately.

- Draw a floor plan of your home, marking all doors and windows, and the location of each smoke alarm. If windows or doors have security bars, equip them with quick-release devices on the inside.
- Locate two escape routes from each room. The first way out would be the door, and the second way out could be a window. If you must use a second-story window as an escape route, consider buying fire escape ladders as a means of emergency escapes.
- As you exit your home, close all doors behind you to slow the spread of fire and smoke.
- If your exit is blocked by smoke or fire, use your second exit to escape. If you must escape through smoke, stay low and crawl under the smoke to safety. Smoke will rise to the ceiling, leaving cooler, cleaner air close to the floor. Crawl on your hands and knees, not belly, because heavier poisons will settle in a thin layer on the floor.

- If you are in a high-rise building, use the stairs - never the elevator - in case of fire.
- Choose a meeting place a safe distance from your home and mark it on the escape plan. A good meeting place would be a tree, telephone pole, or a neighbor's home. In case of fire, everyone should gather at the meeting place.
- Make sure the street number/address of your home is visible to firefighters.
- Once outside call 911 immediately from a nearby or neighbor's phone, or use portable or cellular phone you can grab quickly on the way out. A 911 call takes as long as a full number call to process so stay on the line and don't hang up right away.
- Practice your escape drill at least twice a year.
- NEVER go back inside a burning building! Once out, stay out.

For further information contact San Gabriel Fire Department at (626) 308-2880.