



# TOWN OF HARRISBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT

6450 Morehead Road, Harrisburg North Carolina 28075

Phone: 704-455-3574 Fax 704-455-6391

[www.harrisburgfd.com](http://www.harrisburgfd.com)



## Fire Safety and Prevention tips

### Prepare and Practice a fire escape plan

On the average, a home fire in the US breaks out once every 52 seconds.

Unfortunately, many families are not prepared to take calm, appropriate action if a fire does happen in their home. That's why it is necessary for everyone to design and practice a fire escape plan with their family.

Make a plan and hold regular fire drills to give every household member the confidence and knowledge to act quickly in an emergency.

- Sketch a layout of each floor, including windows, doors and stairways.
- Go over the plan with family members and post it in your home as a reminder of all possible exits.
- Keep the phone number of the Harrisburg Fire Department and other important numbers such as poison control, doctors, etc.
- Have family members practice different escape routes - at least two routes per room. Fire drills also teach children that they must escape and **NOT TO HIDE** from fire.
- Place one family member in charge of helping the elderly or the very young to escape.
- Agree on a meeting place outside the home and instruct everyone to go there in case of a fire. Discuss why you shouldn't go back inside once you're out.

More than 5,000 Americans dies each year from fire and more than 2.5 million fires occur each year, costing Americans \$20 billion. Consider the home fire safety tips and questions outlined below to protect your home and family

### Plan for a fire. Some things to consider are:

- Plan two escape routes out of each room.
- Practice fire drills at least twice a year.
- Teach family members to stay low to the ground to escape from a fire.
- Teach family members never to open doors that are hot. Feel the bottom of door with the back of your hand. If it is hot do not open the door - find another way out.
- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home, clean and test them at least once a month, change batteries at least twice a year (preferably when you change your clocks)



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- Keep a whistle in each bedroom to awaken others in the household in case of fire.
- Check electrical outlets. Do not overload outlets.
- Purchase and learn how to use a fire extinguisher (5lb ABC type).
- Have a collapsible ladder on each upper floor of your house.
- Consider installing home sprinklers.

### Escape Plan

- Do you have a home escape plan?
- Does your family practice their home escape plan four times a year?
- Do you have at least two escape routes per room?
- If there is not a window large enough in the bedroom for you to get out, have you installed an escape ladder from the second floor?
- Should a fire occur, get below (STAY LOW), the smoke.
- In the event of a fire, never go back into the burning building for ANY reason.
- Establish a family meeting place outside your home, in case of a fire family member will meet at this spot.
- If your clothes catch on fire remember **STOP, DROP AND ROLL**

### Smoke Detectors

- Are smoke detectors placed near bedrooms and stairs, away from air vents?
- Do you check your smoke detector at least once a month?
- Do you clean your smoke detector according to the manufacturer's recommendations?
- Do you change the batteries twice a year? **Change your clocks, change your batteries!**

### Calling 911

- Are emergency phone numbers, including 911 posted on or near the telephone?
- Answer all the 911 operators questions and follow their instructions.



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- Speak slowly, clearly and STAY CALM.
- Hang up only when instructed to do so.
- A Telecommunicator is monitoring your call and emergency units are on the way while you answer the call takers questions.
- Provide specific information about the location of the emergency.
- If available, send someone out to meet emergency personnel to direct them to the scene.
- Unlock any gate or doors leading to your home so emergency personnel can make entry.

## **Electrical Considerations**

- Are extension cords used as a replacement for permanent electrical wiring? This is a fire hazard.
- Are electrical cords free of damage, fraying and not placed under rungs or over nails?
- Are electrical appliances and extension cord UL rated?
- When extension cords are used, is their maximum capacity exceeded? Power strips with circuit breakers may be used for plugging in multiple devices.
- Are all fuses in fuse boxes the correct amperage? Never install higher rated fuse than specified.
- Do all electrical outlets and switches have cover plates and no exposed wiring?
- Are extension cords used for electrical space heaters? This overloads the cord's rated capacity.

## **Your Home's Exits**

- Are doors and hallways clear of obstructions?
- Can exit doors be easily opened, without having to search for a key?

## **Matches and Lighters**

- Are all lighters and matches stored out of reach of children?
- Make sure that children know and understand that matches and lighters are tools for adults and not toys for children.



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## **Firearms**

- Are firearms stored in a secure location, inaccessible to children?
- Make sure that children know and understand that firearms are not toys.

## **Fire Extinguishers**

- Is there an operable fire extinguisher installed in the kitchen area and readily accessible?
- Do all adult and older children know how to properly use a fire extinguisher (after the fire department is called)?

## **Home Heating**

- Are electrical space heaters placed no closer than three feet to combustible material?
- Do you turn off your space heaters when leaving home or going to bed?
- Are space heaters placed where they will not be knocked over?
- Are combustion air openings to gas heating devices unobstructed?
- Are all heating vent pipes and chimneys cleaned and kept free of obstructions?
- Do you check the chimney of fireplaces and wood stoves at least once a year for openings into the attic space?
- Is a screen snugly installed in front of the fireplace opening to contain burning embers?
- Are ashes from the fireplace or stove placed in a metal container with a tight fitting lid?

## **Smoking**

- Extinguish cigars, cigarettes and tobacco completely.
- Keep smoking material away from the bedroom area.
- Refrain from smoking when sleepy or under the influence of alcohol or medication.
- Are ashtrays emptied into the toilet, rather than a trash container, or do you wet the ashes prior to disposal in the trash?

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- Are flammable liquids stored in approved UL listed containers?
- Are flammable liquids stored in well ventilated areas and away from ignition sources, such as gas hot water heaters and gas furnaces?

## Storage

- Is all storage neat and orderly in the home?

## Have you tested your smoke detector lately?

- Testing your alarm is as simple as pushing a button!
- Monthly testing is recommended. Even if month testing isn't a standard in your house, fire departments across the county recommend that batteries in smoke detectors be changed twice each year when moving clocks ahead in the spring and back in the fall.
- Many people assume a smoke detector will "chirp" as the battery reaches the end of its useful life, but some don't. Your battery may have sounded its warning while everyone was gone so the "chirp" was never heard.

## **A Guide for Caregivers and Babysitters**

It is important for babysitters to know what to do and how to react in the event of a fire.

The checklist below has been provided to educate babysitters about how to handle an emergency situation should it arise. Use the list as a discussion tool with parents for whom you baby sit,

- Every household should have an escape plan. When you baby sit, discuss what to do in case of fire with the adults in the household.
- Be familiar with their home. Learn all the exits and know how to unlock doors and windows. Know two ways out of each room, especially bedrooms.
- All households should have a meeting place outside where everyone gathers after escaping a fire. Have the adults show you the meeting place and don't confuse children by changing the plan.
- Discuss the escape plan and meeting place with the children. Make sure everyone knows where to meet.
- Be sure you know the location of a neighbor who will be home. In case of fire, call the Fire Department from a neighbor's phone, portable phone or alarm box.
- Never smoke while babysitting. If you find matches, lighters or other smoking materials, put them up high (preferably in a locked cabinet) where children can't see or reach them.



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- Keep children away from portable heaters and space heaters.
- Cook only if you have permission from the adults in the household. Never leave cooking unattended. Set a timer to remind you to turn everything off.
- Enforce a "kid-free zone" of at least three feet around the cooking area. Turn pot handles in (pointing toward the center of the stove) to prevent spilling of hot liquids.
- Never put anything into a microwave unless you are absolutely sure it is safe. If you are unsure of how to use the microwave, do not use it.
- Keep children away from the microwave. Test all foods before serving them to children.
- Supervise children when they are awake and check on them often after they've gone to sleep - until you are sure they are sound asleep. Even then, make sure you can hear them when they wake up.
- If you smell smoke, hear a smoke alarm or see flames, get everybody out. Don't wait for any reason.
- If you encounter smoke while you are escaping a fire, use another exit route. If you must escape through smoke, remember that heat and smoke rise, so cleaner air is near the floor. Crawl on your hands and knees, keeping your head 12 to 24 inches above the floor. Make the children go first and follow close behind.
- After exiting a fire, take the children with you to a neighbor's home and call the Fire Department from there. Give the Fire Department the complete address of the fire and stay on the phone until you're told to hang up. Then call the children's parents.
- Watch children carefully while you're waiting for the Fire Department. Make sure no one goes back inside for any reason. Keep everyone a safe distance from the fire and out of the way of the firefighters.