



ESCAPE PLANS

When fire strikes, you may only have a few minutes from the sounding of the smoke alarm to when your life is seriously threatened by fire or smoke. It is very important that you prepare and practise an escape plan, that everyone knows what the smoke alarm sounds like, and that everyone in the household knows what to do in an emergency.

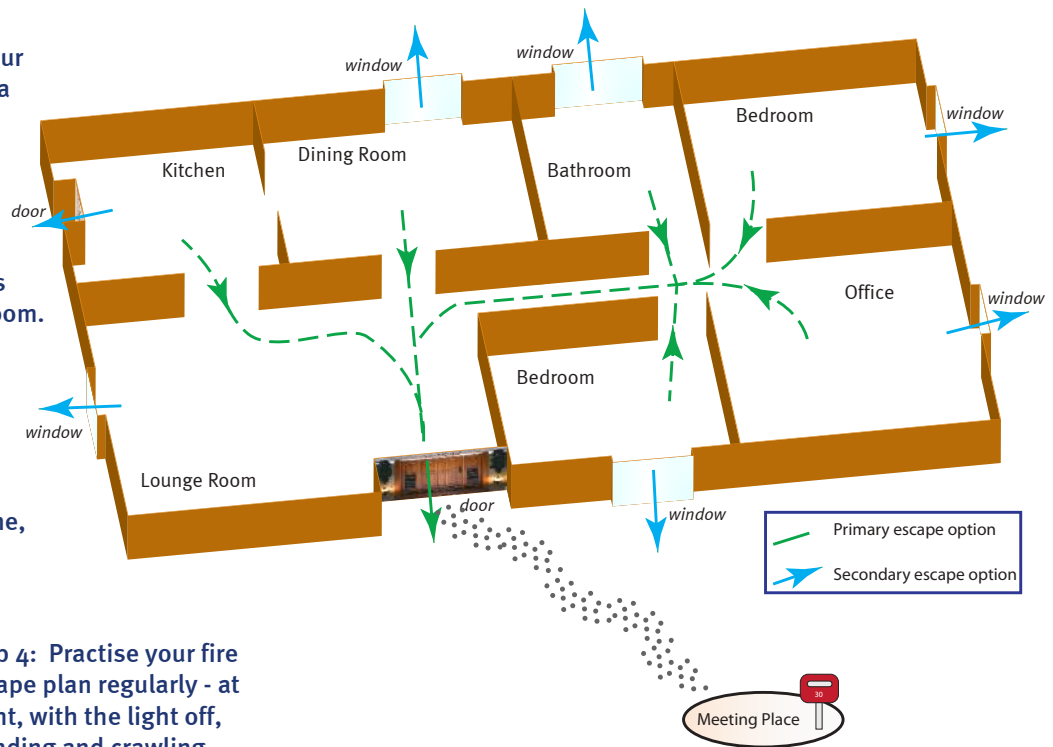
Plan to get out...

Step 1: Draw your escape plan on a sheet of paper.

Step 2: Try to have two ways out of every room.

Step 3: Pick a meeting place outside the home, such as your letterbox.

Step 4: Practise your fire escape plan regularly - at night, with the light off, standing and crawling.



Draw your escape plan on a sheet of paper.

- Display so everyone, including visitors, can see it.
- A basic plan or line drawing is sufficient as long as it shows the primary and secondary escape options.

Try to have two ways out of every room.

- Is your house one level or more?
- Your *primary escape option* is your front or back door. It is the easiest, quickest and safest exit and must be clear of obstructions (e.g. tripping hazards).
- Your *secondary escape option* is through another door or, as a last resort, a window.
 - Use this option if the primary escape is blocked.
 - If you cannot get out, move to a room furthest from the fire that can be seen from outside easily.

- Place a rolled towel or clothing at the bottom of the closed door to stop smoke from entering the room. This will also slow the spread of the fire into the room.
- Open window for fresh air. Shout to attract attention so people know where you are. This ensures attending fire service officers know where you are.
- Leaving from windows or other exits above the ground floor may cause injury and should only be attempted if there is no other means of escape; and the room you are in is no longer safe to stay in.
- In these extreme circumstances, be prepared to smash a window as a means of escape. Use a solid object to break the window, and clear away jagged glass. Always break the glass at the highest part of the window and slowly and carefully work your way down the pane. This will ensure that glass does not fall down on top of you. Place a thickly folded blanket, mat or similar over the window frame to protect yourself against cuts.
- Throw your mattress on to the ground below to lesson the impact of your fall.
- Don't jump out of the window. Lower yourself down as far as you can to reduce the height of your fall. If your home is more than 2 storeys lowering yourself down may still not be enough to allow a safe escape.
- Do doors and windows have security that may impede your escape? Install deadlocks that can be opened from the inside without keys.
- When installing security grills on windows, select a type that easily open outwards from the inside.
- If keys are needed, leave the key in the lock or on a hook on the centre of the door or near the window but out of reach of potential intruders.
- Limit the number of keys needed to open doors by having locks keyed alike.

Pick a meeting place outside the home, such as your letterbox.

- The distance away should be enough that you aren't affected by smoke or heat.
- Account for all people in house.
- If anyone is missing, tell the fire service. DO NOT return to the house.

Practise your fire escape plan regularly - at night, with the light off, standing and crawling.

- Smoke can be disorientating.
- The speed of fire and the toxicity of smoke means you don't have time to think.
- The sound of a smoke alarm can create a surge of adrenalin which may cause panic.
- You are more likely to panic trying to get out if you haven't planned and practised your escape.
- Worrying about everyone else will delay your own escape.
- Use the back of your hand to check closed doors for heat before opening.
- Crawl low. Smoke and heat will build from the ceiling down.
- Close, but do not lock, doors behind you as you exit. This helps to limit the spread of fire and smoke while allowing others to escape and firefighters to access the fire.



Ring Triple Zero (000) and ask for the fire service.

- Ensure everyone is aware of the emergency phone number Triple Zero (000).
- Say your name.
- Say where you are.
- Say what has happened.
- Answer the Operator's questions.
- Stay on the phone with the Operator until they hang up.