PLANNING & PREPAREDNESS

Fire Safety & Immediate Evacuation

When an alarm sounds or you discover a fire, focus on getting out and helping responders locate anyone still inside.

Get out, stay out, and call 911 from a safe place. Never go back inside for belongings, people, or pets.

Leave immediately

- Alert others as you leave. Use your planned safe exit and close doors behind you when possible. Do not stop to collect possessions or investigate the fire.
- If you must move through smoke to escape, get low and go toward the exit. If a door or handle is warm, or smoke blocks the route, use another safe way out.

Use the building plan

- In an apartment, hotel, or workplace, know the building's fire procedures and exit stairs before an emergency. Follow the fire department's instructions.
- Do not use an elevator during a fire unless firefighters direct you. Avoid smoke-filled routes and move to your outside meeting point when you can leave safely.

If exits are blocked

- Close doors between you and the fire. Call 911 and give the building address, your floor, room, and number of people with you.
- Keep smoke out by blocking gaps with available cloth if possible. Signal at a window with a light-colored cloth or flashlight, and follow dispatcher instructions.

Once outside

- Stay at the meeting point and tell firefighters if someone is missing and where they may be. Keep entrances and access routes clear for responders.
- Get medical help for burns, breathing problems, or smoke exposure. Do not enter again until responsible authorities permit it. Practice a home escape plan before a fire occurs.

Sources & further guidance

American Red Cross: What to do if a fire starts | www.redcross.org
U.S. Fire Administration: Fire escape pictographs | www.usfa.fema.gov
U.S. Fire Administration: Home escape plans | www.usfa.fema.gov