

# LOCUST VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT – PUBLIC SAFETY TIPS



## **Family Fire Safety Planning**

When it comes to fire, preparation and practice can save lives. The following will help guide you step by step through making an emergency escape plan for you and your family.

### **Make a Plan**

Sit down with your entire family and make a fire emergency escape plan. Discuss possible escape routes to the outside from every room in your house, especially bedrooms. Then, draw your escape plan with both a normal exit route and an emergency exit route to be used if the normal route is blocked by fire. It is important that you:

- Make sure your plan focuses on getting out of the upstairs bedrooms without using the stairs. Smoke and rising heat usually eliminate stairs as a possible exit.
- Designate a safe meeting place outdoors.
- Pick one person to be responsible for calling the fire department from a neighbor's home if there is a real fire.
- Make sure to review your safety procedures regularly so that all family members know exactly what to do if there is a fire.
- Make sure everyone knows at least two ways out of each room.
- Emphasize the importance of not going back inside the house. You may have only one chance to get out safely. People are often killed attempting to rescue a person or pet who has already left the house. Make sure children know the importance of not going back into the house to try and save a toy.
- Make sure everyone sticks to the plan.

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## **Drill Instructions**

- 1) Practice drills should be held at least twice a year. Hold family drills at night with all the lights out.
- 2) Name one family member as the drill leader. The drill leader is responsible for sounding an alarm to start the drill and timing the drill.
- 3) Have everyone go to their bedrooms, turn out the lights and make sure all the doors are closed.
- 4) Have the drill leader sound the alarm and begin timing the drill.
- 5) All family members should crawl close to the ground pretending there is smoke.
- 6) Everyone should test closed doors. Each family member should pretend the door is cool and open it carefully. Then everyone should proceed to crawl following the normal exit route.
- 7) Once outside, everyone should go to the designated meeting place. The drill leader should take roll. If this was a real fire, one person would use a neighbor's phone to call the fire department.

Conduct a second drill having family members follow alternate exit routes. This time however, each family member should pretend the door is hot and not open the door. Everyone should crawl following the alternate exit route. Emergency windows should be checked to see if they can be opened. Everyone should leave the house via their alternate exit route and meet at the designated outside.

## **Things to Consider**

When conducting drills, keep these questions in mind:

- Are any routes blocked?
- Is there anything that could cause children to fall or stumble?
- Are flashlights readily available in case the lights are not working?
- Are windows low enough to get through and can screens or storm windows be quickly opened from the inside?
- Does each member of your family know how to unlock the windows and remove screens and storm windows?
- Can you and your family exit your home safely using windows?
- Are any windows or screens impossible to open?
- Do any furniture arrangements block escape routes?

Correct any complications or problems that occur during your practice drills. Remember, it is important that all family members, including children, are able to open exit windows.

**REMEMBER ONCE YOU'RE OUT, STAY OUT!**