



TDCJ Risk Management's Training Circular

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November HAVE A PLAN?



This is the time of the year when local fire departments visit schools and daycares to help educate children on fire safety. Remember “Sparky” says to **STOP-DROP-ROLL**.



Do you remember **Smokey The Bear**? Though it is a great idea to start teaching



children at a young age, everyone in the house needs to know the dangers of fire and have a plan of escape if one occurs.

TDCJ also conducts Fire Safety Awareness Training during this time of year for its unit staff, administration staff and unit offenders. Thousands of people die in house or

building fires yearly and through education and practice this number can be reduced. How many of us think about fire escape plans, fire extinguishers or fire alarms? Most of us only think about the smoke alarms when the battery gets low and the chirping starts driving you nuts. Should we only think about these things when we need them? **No**, because then it might be too late.

Do you know where your smoke alarms are located or how many you need in your home? Where is the fire extinguisher located or do you have one? Do you have an escape plan?



One of the most important fire safety devices for the home is the smoke alarm. After becoming

generally available in the early 1970's, home smoke alarm sales grew rapidly and the price fell, so that by 1991, 88% of US homes had at least one, and alarms could be purchased for under \$10.

Several studies have concluded that when working smoke alarms are present, the chance of dying from the fire is cut in half. The smoke alarms currently in place have saved thousands of lives, but several problems exist. First, the 12% of homes without alarms have more than half of the fires; second, it is estimated that a third of the smoke alarms in place are not working, often due to failure to replace a worn out battery; and third, many homes do not have the number of smoke alarms that are needed to protect the occupants properly.

Installing Your Smoke Alarms Properly



- ◆ Install smoke alarms as directed (examined and tested to appropriate product safety standards) by a qualified testing laboratory on every level of your home. Many fatal fires begin late at night or the early morning. For extra safety, install smoke alarms both inside and outside of sleeping areas. Installing your smoke alarms at the proper level will provide you with the earliest warning possible.
- ◆ Mount the smoke alarms high on ceilings or walls—remember, smoke rises. Ceiling mounted alarms should be installed at least 4” away from the nearest wall; wall-mounted alarms should be installed 4” to 12” away from the ceiling.
- ◆ Don’t install smoke alarms near windows, outside doors, or ducts where drafts might interfere with operation.
- ◆ Don’t paint your smoke alarms; paint or other decorations could keep the alarms from working properly.
- ◆ Test your smoke alarm at least once a month by using the alarm “test button”.

- ◆ Replace the batteries in your smoke alarm once a year, or as soon as the warning “chirps” that the battery is low.



Helpful Hints

- ◆ Never “borrow” a battery from a smoke alarm.
- ◆ Schedule battery replacement for the same day you change your clock from daylight to standard time in the fall, or pick a holiday, maybe your birthday
- ◆ Replace your smoke alarm every 10 years.
- ◆ Regularly vacuuming or dusting your smoke alarm following manufactures instructions can help keep it working properly.
- ◆ Ensure everyone in your home or office area can hear and recognize the sound of the alarm and knows the fire escape plans.

Fire Escape Plans

A fire escape plan must be created and practiced so that everyone knows what to do in the event of a fire in their area. It is also very important to practice fire drills. Regardless

of the cause of a fire, the area may be filled with smoke. This is a very dangerous situation and you may not be able to see very well. The smoke and toxic gases may cause dizziness and disorientation. In the confusion, one can easily become lost or trapped in a building.

Everyone must understand that their safety depends upon quickly leaving the area. It has been proven that fire drills reduce chances of panic and injury in fires and through training and being informed you have a much better chance to survive a fire. Knowing your fire escape plan can mean the difference between life and death. Be prepared to act quickly.

- ◆ Ensure everyone in your office, building, and home knows the evacuation routes and the exit door locations, including windows.
- ◆ Test all smoke alarms monthly to ensure that they work. Replace batteries, as needed.
- ◆ Make sure everyone understands where the area of safe refuge is located.
- ◆ ***Remember to get out first, then call for help. Never go back inside for anything, until the fire department gives the OK.***
- ◆ Once you are out, **stay out**, and away leave the fire

fighting to the professionals.



Fire Extinguisher Use

Remember when you are trying to extinguish a fire the 4-letter word - **PASS**.

Pull pin - This allows you to activate the extinguisher.

Aim - Hold hose and point at the base of the fire.

Squeeze - The trigger mechanism to release the agent.

Sweep - Back and forth at the base of the fire.

Fire is FAST!

There is little time to respond. In **less than 30 seconds** a small flame can get completely out of control and turn into a major fire. It only takes a minute for thick black smoke to fill a house or office area. In no time an area can be engulfed in flames. Most fires occur in the home when people are asleep. If you wake up to a fire, you won't have time to grab valu-



ables because fires spread. There is only time to escape.

Fire is HOT!

Heat is more threatening than flames. A fire's heat alone can kill. Room temperatures in a fire can be 100 degrees at floor level and rise to 600 degrees at eye level. Inhaling this super hot air can scorch your lungs. In 5 minutes a room can get so hot that everything in it ignites at once: this is called flash-over.

Fire is DARK!

Fire isn't bright, it's pitch **black**. Fire starts bright, but quickly produces black smoke and complete darkness. If you wake up to a fire you may be blinded, disoriented and unable to find your way around the home you have lived in for years.

Fire is DEADLY!

Smoke and toxic gases kill more people than flames do. Fire uses up the oxygen you need and produces smoke and poisonous gases that kill. Breathing even small amounts of smoke and toxic gases can make you drowsy, disoriented and short of breath. The odorless, colorless fumes can lull you into a deep sleep before the flames reach your door.

Remember having a working smoke alarm and practicing your escape plans, can save your life.

Types of Fire

Class A Fires

Paper, wood, cloth, etc. Where drenching by water or insulating by general purpose dry chemical is effective.



Class B Fires

Burning liquids (gasoline, petroleum products, etc.) Where smothering action is required.



Class C Fires

Fire in live electrical equipment (motors, switches, appliances, etc.) Where a non-conductive extinguishing agent is required.



Class K Fires

Specifically for a kitchen grease fire and are required to be installed in restaurant kitchens.



COOKING
K
MEDIA

Now that you understand fire prevention, always remember

- ◆ Get out first.
- ◆ Stay out.
- ◆ Call 911.



REFERENCES

For More information please refer to the following:

Hazards of a fire

- ◆ Burns
- ◆ Asphyxiation
- ◆ Property damage
- ◆ Job loss
- ◆ Death

Fire Prevention

- ◆ Store flammable liquids only in approved containers.
- ◆ No open flames near flammable materials.
- ◆ Do not overload electrical circuits.
- ◆ Good Housekeeping.
- ◆ Do not leave appliances in the **ON** position and unattended.
- ◆ Store bikes, chairs, desk and other items in proper locations and out of the point of travel to prevent blocked exits and tripping hazards.
- ◆ Utilize designated smoking areas.

National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA).
www.nfpa.org.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). www.osha.gov

State Office of Risk Management (SORM).
www.sorm.state.tx.us.

Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) Division of Worker's Compensation (DWC). <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/pubs/videoresource/wpfires.pdf>



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