

## Create an Escape Plan

Fires occur most frequently at night after we go to sleep. When a fire breaks out we must have a plan. We are at a disadvantage; it's dark, the power may be out, we might be asleep and therefore groggy, and there isn't much time to react. Your life depends on already knowing your fire escape plan.

When you first enter your new place of residence, whether it is a residence hall, off-campus housing, or a sorority/fraternity house, find all the fire safety equipment. Look for the smoke alarm and fire alarms. Is there a sprinkler system or do you only have smoke alarms in the rooms? Check the nearest smoke alarm to see if it is working. If the smoke alarm uses a battery then it must be changed once a year.

Be sure you know the rules and guidelines that apply to your place of residence. Participate in all fire drills. If you live where there are no fire drills then you must practice on your own.

Know where your exits are located. Each room needs two ways out. When you visit other places, any place you go, it is important to know what your second exit will be in case of fire.

Understand your escape route. Are the exits clear? Can you find your way in the dark?  
When a fire breaks out is there a fire alarm for you to pull and where is it?

When the alarms sound you must leave right away. Treat every alarm as real. Do not stop for anything you do not need to get out, such as your books or your computer. When there is a fire, time is everything and can make the difference between being trapped or getting out.

Before opening any doors feel them to see if they are hot. If the door is hot use your second way out. Do you live on a second story? Do you have an escape ladder?

If you do not feel heat, open the door slowly. If you do not see heat or smoke stay low to the ground and crawl toward your exits. Staying low will help to avoid the dangerous heat and smoke. However, it might be safer to stay in your room, close the door and call for help, telling the fire department you are trapped in your room. Trying to get out through smoke might be more dangerous than staying in your room and calling for help.

As you leave, close doors behind you. This will help to contain the fire.

Never try to stay and fight a fire. Never try to return once you have escaped.

### **If you cannot get out then follow these steps.**

- Keep the door closed, put a towel or t-shirt at the bottom to keep smoke from entering. If you do not see smoke outside your window, then open it slightly to let fresh air in.
- Signal for help – yell or scream to attract attention. Hang an object from the window that can easily be seen. If you have a phone, call the fire department and report that you are trapped. Be sure to give your room number and location.