

# Hello from the NYS Department of State's Division of Consumer Protection!

## **Consumer Alert: Fire Safety Tips**

The Division of Consumer Protection would like to remind consumers of fire dangers and pass along useful tips that will help you stay safe.

Fires can occur in a variety of circumstances and situations. They can be caused by gas leaks, smoking, forgotten candles, electrical outlets, cooking mistakes, car accidents, the list goes on. But one thing fires have in common is that they cause additional injuries, not just burns. In a fire, smoke and hazardous gases (such as carbon monoxide to name one) travel faster and further than heat which is why a majority of fire victims die from smoke and toxic gas inhalation and not just from burns.

Sadly, in 2015, more than a million fires were reported in the United States causing more than 15,000 injuries and more than 3,000 deaths. In New York State alone, 157 people died as a result of fires between 2011-2015, ranking third in the U.S.

It is important to be mindful of the hazards and prevention methods that can save your life and the lives of your loved ones. Keeping working and functioning fire alarms, knowing multiple escape routes and having a plan in place for when a fire occurs are all crucial in saving your life and protecting your home. Please read and share the following tips to help keep you and your family safe for fire dangers.

### **Fire Safety Tips: *Use these tips today to protect your home and family***

#### **Smoke Alarms**

- Make sure your home has working smoke alarms.
- Place a smoke alarm on every level including inside each sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area. Interconnect the alarms so when one sounds, they all sound.
- Install smoke alarms and alert devices to assist family members who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Alert devices, such as strobe lights, flash when the smoke alarm sounds. Pillow or bed shakers may be useful to wake a person who is sleeping. The shakers are triggered by the sound of the smoke alarm and shake people awake to warn them of a fire.
- Test your alarms at least once a month. Press each test button to make sure it is working.
- Review the Consumer Product Safety Commission, [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov), website for information on recalled smoke alarms.

#### **Home Escape Plan**

- Plan your home escape; including two ways out of each room. Share the escape plan with everyone in the family and guests.
- The plan should include two ways out of every room and an outside family meeting place.
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- Practice your fire drill.
- Make sure children, older adults, and people with disabilities have assistance.
- Make sure your home has bright lighting in stairways to prevent falls.
- Remove clutter to prevent trips and falls to allow for a quick escape.
- Install handrails along the full length of both sides of the stairs.
- If you live in an apartment, know the location of all available exit stairs on your floor in case the nearest one is blocked by fire or smoke and use the stairs to get out, never use the elevator unless directed by the fire department.

### **Fire Response**

- If there is a fire, get outside quickly and stay outside. Then call 9-1-1.
- If you can't get outside call 9-1-1. Let the fire department know you can't get outside. Wave a light-colored cloth or a flashlight near the window, but don't open the window.
- If there is smoke, use your second way out. If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke.

For more information on fire safety, prevention and response, visit:

- [Consumer Product and Safety Commission \(CPSC\)](#)
- [American Red Cross](#)
- [NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, Office of Fire Prevention and Control](#)

[To view our fire safety brochure, click here!](#)

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*Smoke Alarms – Why, Where, and Which (CPSC Pub. 559)* (n.d.) Page 1. Retrieved from **Consumer Product Safety Commission** [https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/pdfs/blk\\_media\\_559.pdf](https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/pdfs/blk_media_559.pdf)

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