



ABINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT - #3



FIRE ESCAPE PLANNING

NARRATOR:

When it comes to protecting your home and loved ones from fire, many of us know that installing working smoke detectors is an important precaution. But many of us may not take the additional step of planning in advance what to do once the smoke alarm goes off.

Developing a fire escape plan and then practicing random drills throughout the year can help prepare your family to respond quickly and safely in an emergency situation. The Abington Township Fire Department, in conjunction with the National Fire Protection Association, recommends the following tips:

FIREFIGHTER: MIKE RATKA:

Start by drawing a simple house plan depicting each of the rooms of your home. Then determine the best exit routes from those rooms. Each room should have two exits – one through a door and one that doesn't require exit through a door. This is important in case fire is blocking one of the exits. If there are bedrooms on the second floor, consider purchasing and storing escape ladders in these rooms so that the occupants can get out safely in an emergency.

After drafting your plan, establish a safe meeting place outside the home for family members to go to once they have escaped. That way, you can determine whether or not everyone has gotten out of the building.

NARRATOR:

Once your escape plan has been made, it is important to practice it so that family members know how to carry it out in an emergency situation. Practicing twice a year is recommended – once during warm weather months and once during the winter. So as not to frighten young children, tell them before they go to bed that they will be awakened to do a drill.

FIREFIGHTER: MIKE RATKA:

When you conduct your drill, it's important to note which members of the family may not wake up to the sound of the smoke alarm. If someone does not wake up, consider installing a second smoke detector in this person's room rather than in a hallway or other common area.

When the alarm goes off, make sure family members know what to do. They should test for heat before opening bedroom doors by touching the doorknob or door frame with the back of their hand. If they don't feel heat, they can open the door and prepare to exit by staying low to the ground to avoid inhaling smoke or gases. Teach them to close doors on their way out, since this can help prevent the spread of fire and give family members more time to escape.

In some cases, smoke or fire may prohibit someone from exiting the room, so prepare for the situation by closing doors between yourself and the fire during the drill. Practice using duct tape, towels, or a pillow to seal door cracks and cover air vents. Remember to have a flashlight or light-colored cloth or items that can be thrown out the window to help firefighters quickly locate someone who is trapped. If you have an escape ladder, practice using it.

Being prepared to exit a building in a fire is just as important when you're away from home. While it may not be practical to have a fire drill while you are on vacation and staying at a hotel or motel, you can still take several steps to protect your safety by reviewing the hotel evacuation plan located on the back of the room door, and noting the location of fire exits, fire extinguishers and fire alarms on your floor.

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Once you're out, stay out! Do not re-enter a burning building. If someone is missing, call the fire department from a cell phone or a neighbor's house and let the dispatcher know right away.

While it may seem difficult to remember all of these safety rules in an emergency situation, you may find that with repeated drills and reminders, they will become easier and easier to recall. Being prepared in an emergency situation can make all the difference when it comes to saving lives and protecting your home.

If you would like more information about volunteering for the Abington Township Fire Department, please stop by your local fire company or visit our web site at www.AbingtonFD.org.

