



Fire Safety Planning and Emergency Guidelines for Individual & Family Homes

(This document is a summary of best practices for Individual and Family Homes as described in the DDS Fire Safety Emergency Guidelines Main Document.)



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY GUIDELINES
FOR INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY HOMES

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INTRODUCTION

The safety and well-being of all consumers and their families has always been important to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). This book is a guide for the individuals we support who live in their own homes or with a family. Our goal is to give you the information you need to be aware of safety, to set up a safety plan and to practice what you learn so that you know what to do if a fire or other emergency happens in or near your home. In this guide, you will learn how to keep yourself and others safe. You will also learn how to look for things that could be unsafe in your home and who to talk to when you need help fixing any problems. We offer tips that can help you prevent emergencies and plan what you will do if an emergency does happen.

You can also help your friends, their families and others to be safe by talking about the things you see in their homes that might be unsafe. Nobody wants or expects a fire or other emergency.

Think safety every day, so that being safe becomes a way of life!

Chapter 1- Fire Emergencies: General Instructions

The two most important things you can do to reduce the chance of fire in your home is to have a plan of action and practice what you will do if a fire breaks out. Having a plan is very important because you learn the dangers of fire and increase your ability to escape. Practicing your plan helps you become more sure of yourself, see what works and what does not work under safe conditions and be better able to avoid injury and get out of a fire, if one occurs.

Fire Safety Plan

1. Decide on a place of safety outside the home where you will go during a fire.
2. Prepare a GO BAG ahead of time with items that you need in case you cannot return home after a fire.
3. Fill out the File of Life form and keep on your refrigerator for firefighter's information
4. Which windows and doors in your home can be used to get out of the house? Be sure that the doors and windows are not blocked by furniture or other items that may make it hard for you to leave the house.
5. There should be a smoke detector on every floor of your home, and it should be tested monthly and kept clean.
6. If you live in an apartment building, do not use the elevator to leave the building during fire; use the stairs.
7. Learn and practice all safety procedures
 - a. **R.A.C.E**
Remove all people from the house
Alert everyone to get out now and call 911
Confine the fire – close a door to slow the fire from spreading
Extinguish – if time permits, with proper equipment, put out the fire (getting out should be your first action; try to put out a fire only if you have learned how to and can do so safely)
 - b. **Stop, Drop and Roll**
STOP – do not move if you are on fire, air feeds fire
DROP – drop to the ground
ROLL – cover your face and roll around on the ground to put out the fire
 - c. **P.A.S.S. (Fire Extinguisher Use, if available)**
Pull - the pin
Aim - at the bottom of the fire
Squeeze - the trigger
Sweep - across the base of the fire

General Information

1. If you hear a smoke detector alarm, you should leave the house right away.
2. Tell others in the home to get out.
3. Stay low to the ground if there is smoke – smoke is often as dangerous as the flames.
4. Only firefighters should go back into the home during a fire – ONCE OUT, STAY OUT!
5. Call or ask someone else to **CALL 911** – report all fire emergencies to the fire department.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!!

Chapter 2- Other Emergencies: Hazards Inside and Outside the Home

Being safe includes many concerns besides fire emergencies. Whether you live alone, with a roommate or with your family, you must always be aware that your actions or the conditions around you could be unsafe. This is true whether you are inside or outside your home.

Inside Your Home

1. Electric
DO NOT plug too many cords into one outlet – it could cause fire or electric failure
Keep cords away from water
DO NOT put rugs on top of cords
Replace cords when broken, DO NOT use tape to fix them
2. Cooking
Keep towels, pot holders and paper away from the stove top
NEVER use water on a grease fire – it will spread the fire
Turn off all burners and the oven when not in use
Turn pot handles inward to avoid getting burns from spilled hot grease or food
DO NOT climb on the counter to reach something in the cabinet
3. Carbon Monoxide
Detectors should be installed near all sleeping rooms
Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are very close to the flu – headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, fatigue
Go to your point of safety and **CALL 911** if your detector alarm sounds
4. Smoking
No smoking inside your home – there is a high risk of fire
DO NOT litter – discard smoking materials in container that can be closed and is fire safe
5. Open Flames
Candles with light bulbs are more safe than a lit wick
Burning candles can be very dangerous – even the ones in glass containers can be easily tipped over and may cause fire
Keep candles away from curtains, furniture, magazines and other things that may catch fire when in close contact
DO NOT leave candles burning – blow them out when leaving the room
6. Alternative Heating Sources
Fire places, electric heaters and wood stoves should be kept on a solid surface
Keep area around these heaters clean and neat
Dispose of ash and waste in a safe, fireproof container – mix with water if fire is not completely out
7. Holiday Decorations
Many holiday decorations pose fire safety issues
Keep away from any heat or flame source
If you have live trees at Christmas, be sure to water often to avoid fire hazard

Outside Your Home

1. Exits
Trim the bushes and pick up any sticks or other trash that could block the windows or doors you might use to get out of your house during a fire

2. Outdoor Grills
Keep away from buildings
Must always be watched while in use
After use, close lid until the grill and coals have cooled

3. Severe Weather (Hurricanes and Tornadoes)
WATCH – a storm is possible
WARNING – means the storm is expected in your area or has been seen

Listen to the local radio stations to get information about the storm
Prepare for a storm before one happens - have plenty of batteries and flashlights
Open the windows a bit – close curtains to avoid flying glass
In case of immediate danger, move to a hallway with no windows, or a basement
Use blankets to protect you from flying glass

4. Extreme Temperatures
25 degrees or less - poses a frostbite danger – when outside, wear hats, gloves, boots, scarves
Over 90 degrees – drink extra fluids to keep your body cool, stay in a cooler place in the house, stop tiring activities, dress in light clothing

Chapter 3: Developing Community Relationships for Safety

Your local fire department and Fire Marshal's Office have a definite interest in assisting you in keeping your location free from fire. Developing relationships to open communication in the area of prevention also assists your local department and YOU in the event of an emergency. They may assist you in planning escape routes, where to install smoke detectors and provide you with additional resources.

Contact your local Fire Department or local Fire Marshal's office for more information.