



4905 Ruf Ave. Fort Rucker, AL 36362-5363
Comm. (334) 255-3770 Fax (334) 255-2609
<https://safety.army.mil>

Are you ready at home?

Art Powell
Directorate of Communication and Public Affairs
U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center

A home fire isn't the time to create a family evacuation plan.

Home fires never occur at a convenient time. You may be awakened at 2:30 a.m. by the smell of smoke or the sound of an alarm. Your mind races: Am I really awake? Is this really happening? I've got to get my family out of here, now! Do something!

Your ability to get out of a fire emergency depends on warnings from smoke detectors and advanced planning, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

"In a fire, seconds count and you may have as little as one to two minutes to safely escape once the smoke alarm sounds," said the NFPA's Judy Comoletti. "That's why it's critical every home has working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of the home (including the basement), outside each sleeping area and inside each bedroom. For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms so when one sounds, they all sound."

During 2013, an estimated 369,000 reported structure fires resulted in 2,755 civilian deaths in the United States. Planning is key to preparing to evacuate in a fire emergency at your residence.

Gather as a family and make a plan by walking through your home and inspecting all possible exits and escape routes. Think about showing children two exits from each room, such as a door and window. Designate a gathering point outside the home for everyone to meet once they exit.

"Escape planning is an important element of home fire safety," said Comoletti. "A home fire escape plan is put in place if the smoke alarm sounds. The plan should include two ways out of every room and an outside meeting place where everyone will gather. Once outside the home, call 911 using a cellphone or neighbor's phone. It's important to practice your home fire drill at least twice a year."

The American Red Cross reports that 80 percent of Americans don't realize home fires are the single-most common disaster in the United States. The organization estimates only 26 percent of families have actually developed and practiced an escape plan.

"The leading cause of home fires is unattended cooking. Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling or broiling food. If you must leave the kitchen, even for a short time, turn off the stove," said Comoletti.

For more information on fire safety, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.