



**American Red Cross**  
Palmetto South Carolina Region

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# My Home Fire Safety Guide

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In partnership with:



[redcross.org/sc/homefires](https://redcross.org/sc/homefires)  
**#FireSafeSC**

# Welcome to the American Red Cross Home Fire Safety Guide.

The Red Cross responds to nearly **70,000** disasters a year and the vast majority are home fires. We launched a Home Fire campaign in October 2014 to help people prepare for, respond to and recover from home fires. Our goal—reduce home fire deaths and injuries in our nation by 25% over the next 5 years.

In South Carolina alone, the Red Cross assists more than **7,100** people every year due to home fires.

At the Red Cross, we want to make sure your family and community stay safe. This home fire safety guide provides the knowledge and resources to help you keep your family safe, in case of a home fire.



There were **79 deaths** and more than **\$87 million** in residential property damages in 2014.

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The American Red Cross Home Fire Preparedness Campaign in South Carolina is made possible through the generosity of donors and volunteers.

**Thank you to our supporters!**

**Colonial Life**  
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**McLeod Health**  
The Choice for Medical Excellence

Sandra J. Klein

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## Just 2 Minutes

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In case of a home fire, can your family escape in 2 minutes?

It's important to know. Because more lives are lost every year to home fires than all major disasters.

With moments to act, you can be prepared and it starts with 2 simple steps.

### Step 1



Practice your  
2-minute drill.

Use the Home Fire Escape Plan worksheet to plan your evacuation and practice it at least twice a year as a family.

### Step 2



Test your smoke  
alarms monthly.

Make sure you and your family are alerted as soon as a fire is detected. If the smoke alarm isn't working, change the batteries.

### Step 1 Fire Drills

Fire experts agree you may have as little as 2 minutes to escape a burning home before it's too late to get out. Use the Home Fire Escape Plan worksheet in this guide to plan your evacuation and practice it at least 2 times a year as a family.

### Step 2 Working Smoke Alarms

Working smoke alarms cut the risk of fire fatalities in 1/2. Install smoke alarms on every level of your home inside bedrooms and sleeping areas.

#### Your Smoke Alarms

- Test – Smoke alarms need to be tested once a month using the test button.
- Change batteries – If your existing smoke alarms are powered by batteries, be sure to change your batteries twice a year when you change your clocks.



- Replace old alarms – Smoke alarms expire 10 years after installation and will need to be replaced. Even after 10 years, your alarms will still beep when you press test, but the components inside might not activate as quickly as they did when it was new.
- Install – You should have a smoke alarm in every sleeping area, outside those sleeping areas, and one on each floor of your house including the basement.

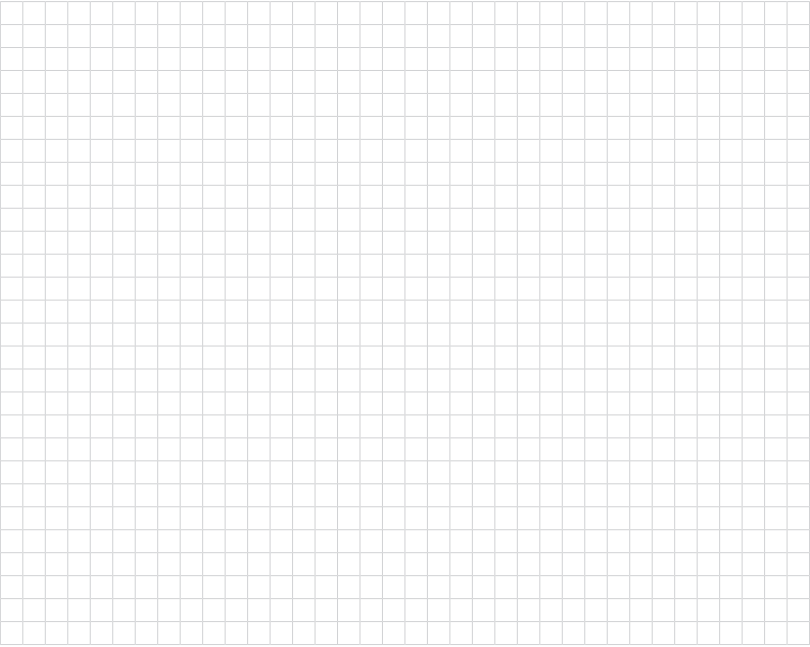
### Tip

Some of the smoke alarms we'll be installing have a "hush" button that will "hush" it for 5 minutes. This button is only to be used when your alarm goes off and you're certain there is no fire. For example, when you're cooking and there is no fire. You can use a broom handle to push the button if needed.



# Home Fire Escape Plan

Use the graph to draw your home's floor plan, and plot your home fire escape routes.



**Tips for creating and practicing your escape plan:**

- Everyone in your household should know *two* ways to escape from each room in your home.
- Decide where to meet once you get outside.
- If a fire starts, you may have just **two minutes** to get to safety. So time your fire drills and find out: what's your escape time?
- Smoke is dangerous. Practice low crawling. If smoke is too thick to crawl under, use your backup route.
- Remember to practice closing doors behind you as you escape to cut off the fire's source of fresh air.



**If a fire starts in your home, get out to safety, then dial 911.**

# Prepare and Prevent

The best way to protect you, your family and home is to be prepared.

## Home Fire Safety Checklist

It starts by knowing what a fire hazard is, how to avoid them and what should be removed to help keep your family safe. Your home may have fire hazards you aren't aware of from your kitchen to your bedrooms, and living areas.

Use our Home Fire Safety Checklist to reduce the risk of a home fire.

### Cooking Safety



- ☐ “Keep an eye on what you fry.” Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling or using an open flame.

### Fireplaces, Space Heaters, Baseboards, etc.



- ☐ “3 feet from the heat.” Furniture, curtains, dish towels and anything that could catch fire are at least 3 feet from any type of heat source.

### Smoking Safety



- ☐ Never smoke in bed.

### Electrical and Appliance Safety



- ☐ Large and small appliances are plugged directly into wall outlets.

### Children Playing



- ☐ Matches and lighters are locked away.

### Smoke Alarms



- ☐ Change smoke alarm batteries every year unless it has a long-life battery.
- ☐ Replace smoke alarms every ten years.
- ☐ Test your smoke alarms each month. If they're not working, they can't get you out the door.

## Get a Kit. Make a plan. Be informed.

It's important to prepare for possible disasters and other emergencies. Natural and human-caused disasters can strike suddenly, at anytime and anywhere. There are certain actions everyone can take that can help make a difference.

### Be Red Cross Ready Checklist

- ☐ I know what emergencies or disasters are most likely to occur in my community.
- ☐ I have a family disaster plan and have practiced it.
- ☐ I have an emergency-preparedness kit.
- ☐ At least one member of my household is trained in first aid and CPR/AED.

### Get a kit

- 1 gallon of water per person per day
- 3-day supply of non-perishable, easy-to-prepare food
- Medical items
- Flashlight
- Extra batteries
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- Copies of personal documents
- Cell phone with chargers
- Family and emergency contact information
- Maps of the area



### Make a plan

- Meet with your household members; discuss how to prepare for emergencies likely to happen where you live, learn, work and play.
- Identify responsibilities for each family member.
- Choose two places to meet, if separated by an emergency:
  - Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, such as fire.
  - Outside your neighborhood, in case you cannot return home or are asked to evacuate.
- Choose out-of-area emergency contact; all household members should have emergency-contact information in writing or in their cell phones.

### Plan what to do if you have to evacuate

- Decide what route you would take and how you would get there.
- Practice evacuating home twice a year.
- Plan ahead for your pets. Keep a phone list of pet-friendly hotels/motels and animal shelters.

### Be informed

- Identify how local authorities will notify you during a disaster and how you will get information, whether through local radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio stations.
- Know the difference between different weather alerts, such as watches and warnings, and what actions to take in each.

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To learn more about disaster preparedness, visit [redcross.org/prepare](https://www.redcross.org/prepare).

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## Help is in Your Hand

### Free expert emergency information when and where you need it—in the palm of your hand.

Our Emergency, First Aid and Blood apps provide the safety tools, tips and preparedness information you'll need during emergencies, severe weather, and every day.

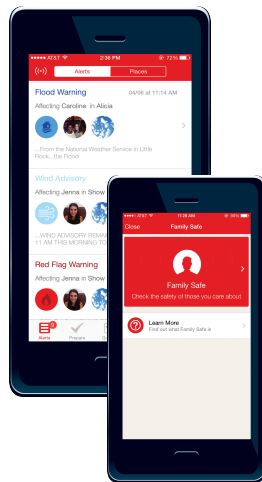


The one resource that gives you vital information in an all-inclusive app. Get access and highly customizable content to more than 35 different severe weather and emergency alerts\* from natural to man-made, giving you real-time information to help keep you and your family safe.

- Choose alerts that are important to your location. Monitor activity across the country to know what's about to occur where your family and friends are located.
- Activate "Family Safe" to notify family and friends that an alert's been issued in their area and check to see if they're safe.
- Access information on what to do before, during and after an emergency strikes.
- Gain guidance on topics from home fires and water safety, to first aid.

Plus, you can view all the content in Spanish!

**Download Today!** Text GETEMERGENCY to 90999 or search "Red Cross Emergency" in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store



The First Aid app gives expert advice for everyday emergencies. Get instant access to the information you need to know so you can handle the most common first aid emergencies. With videos, interactive quizzes and simple step-by-step advice it's never been easier to know first aid.

**Download Today!** Text "GETFIRST" to 90999 or search "Red Cross First Aid" in the Apple App Store, Google Play or Amazon Marketplace. Also available in Spanish!



Get the first-of-its kind Blood Donor App that gives the power to save lives in your hand. Users can schedule appointments, track total donations, earn rewards and invite others to join them on a lifesaving team. The Blood Donor App is a great way to help meet the constant need for blood.

**Download Today!** Text "GETFIRST" to 90999 or search "Red Cross First Aid" in the Apple App Store, Google Play or Amazon Marketplace.



\* Alerts from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and US Geological Survey (USGS)

## Monster Guard game for youth



## Help kids stay safe with a Fun, New and Free game!

Prepare kids for real emergencies in an engaging way. Monster Guard brings Maya, Chad, Olivia and all the monsters to life so kids can:

- ★ **Learn** how to stay safe in real emergencies—at home and around the country.
- ★ **Practice** what they've learned as they go through lots of challenging levels, earning points and medals.
- ★ **Share** with their friends when they pass levels and what they've learned with grown-ups.



Download today! Go to [redcross.org/monsterguard](https://redcross.org/monsterguard), text 'KIDSPREPARE' to 90999 or search 'Monster Guard' in your mobile app store.



# Safety 101

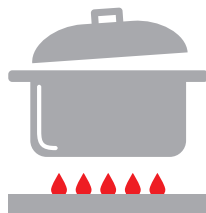
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## Cooking Safety

Cooking is the most common cause of house fires.

### Tips

- Don't leave food on the stove unattended
- Keep young children and pets at least 3 feet away from the stove.
- Move items that can burn away from the stove such as dishtowels, bags and boxes.
- Clean the stove and the area around it before turning on the heat.
- Turn pot handles to the back of the stove to avoid spills.



Nearly 1 in 5 Americans, **16%** admit to leaving food cooking unattended on the stove.

### What to do—if a cooking fire occurs

- **Pan fire** – If a pan catches fire, don't move it. Slide a pan lid or cookie sheet on top of the pan to put out the fire. Turn off the heat. Keep the lid on the pan until it cools. Never try to stop a grease or oil fire with water—it will fuel the fire.
- **Oven fire** – If something catches fire in the oven, keep the door closed. Call 9-1-1 so firefighters can make sure the fire didn't spread to the walls. If a fire occurs in the microwave, keep the door closed and unplug the microwave if you can. Don't use it again until a repairman checks it.
- **Kitchen fire** – If the kitchen catches fire, make sure everyone gets out and call 9-1-1 when outside. Once outside, stay out. Never go back inside a burning building.

### Heating Your Home Safely

Heat sources such as space heaters, fireplaces or wood and coal stoves can pose a fire hazard. To reduce the risk of heating related fires, the Red Cross recommends the following tips:

- All heaters need space. Keep children, pets and things that can burn—paper, matches, bedding, furniture, clothing, carpets, and rugs at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Never leave a fire in the fireplace unattended, and use a glass or metal fire screen to keep fire and embers in the fireplace.
- Never use a cooking range or oven to heat your home.
- Have wood and coal stoves, fireplaces, and chimneys inspected annually by a professional, and cleaned if necessary.
- If you must use a space heater, place it on a level, hard and nonflammable surface (such as ceramic tile floor), not on rugs, or carpets or near bedding or drapes.
- Plug space heaters directly into outlets and never into an extension cord.
- Turn off portable space heaters every time you leave the room or go to sleep.



**16%** of home fire deaths involved home heating equipment.

Source: NFPA



## Electrical Safety

### Tips

- Plug appliances directly into wall outlets.
- Don't overload outlets or extension cords.
- Don't run extension cords under rugs or where they can create trip hazards and wear out easily.
- Turn off electrical appliances before leaving home.
- Turn off electrical appliances before going to sleep.



**20%** of Americans—1 in 5 who know someone affected by a fire admit to leaving home with an electrical appliance running.

## Fire Extinguishers

### Tips on using

- Only use your fire extinguisher if the fire is small and after the fire department has been called.
- Never go beyond your abilities, if the extinguisher is too heavy or the fire is growing, know when to go. Get out and stay out.
- Install fire extinguishers close to an exit and keep your back to a clear exit when you use the device so you can make an easy escape if the fire cannot be controlled.
- Always keep your fire extinguisher maintained and contact your local fire department if you need yours inspected.
- Local fire departments or fire equipment distributors often offer hands-on fire extinguisher trainings.

## Open Flame Safety

Using light sources with open flames can increase the risk of a home fire.

When burning candles:

- Use battery operated flashlights or lanterns instead of candles during a power outage.
- Extinguish all candles before going to sleep.
- Keep candles away from flammable materials, such as curtains.
- Talk to your children regularly about the dangers of fire, matches and lighters and keep them out of reach.
- Teach your children to tell you or a responsible adult when they find matches or lighters at home or school.



Nearly 1 in 5 Americans—**17%** who know someone affected by a fire admit to falling asleep with a candle burning.

## If you smoke

- Never smoke in bed.
- Properly extinguish all smoking materials.
- Smoke outside the home.



**4%** of Americans admit to having smoked cigarettes while in bed.

## Mission

The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.

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For more tips on how to prepare your family or business, to become a volunteer, or to make a financial donation:

**[redcross.org/sc](https://www.redcross.org/sc)**

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# Numbers to Know

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<b>Emergency Service Fire, Police, and EMS</b>	<b>911</b>
Poison Control	1-800-922-1117
South Carolina Highway Patrol	1-803-385-3107
United Way	1-866-892-9211 or 211 from a house phone
American Red Cross	1-800-REDCROSS
American Red Cross (Military)	1-877-272-7337
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Community, Health, and Disaster Information	211
Non-Emergency Police and Other County / City Services	311
Directory Assistance	411
Traveler Information	511
Repair Service	611
Telecom Relay Services (TTY)	711
Call Before You Dig	811



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