



3 minute drill

A fire safety guide

3 minute CONTENTS



PREVENTION

Take simple steps in and around your house to ensure fires don't have a chance to start.

4



DETECTION

Find out how and why alarms and extinguishers could save your life.

16



ESCAPE PLAN

Learn how to get everyone out quickly and safely.

24



QUIZ

Test your fire safety smarts.

28



RESOURCES

Want to learn more? Find out from the experts.

30

3 minutes could save your life.

What you need to know about fire

Fires are caused by three essential elements coming together: heat, fuel, and oxygen. When you remove one of these essential elements, you help prevent fires.

Heat sources can exist throughout your home, and include things like stoves, ovens, or matches and cigarettes. Fuel includes flammable materials like cooking oil, furniture, newspapers, carpet or gasoline.

Fires are deadlier than ever

Unlike 25 years ago, a house fire today can turn deadly in as little as 3 minutes. Nearly 300 Canadians will die this year in fires that are:

Fast The only thing you'll have time to do is get out.

Dark Smoke has no way to escape, and it hangs like a choking blanket – thick, dark and toxic. By the time you wake up, you may not be able to find your way out.

Hot The temperature in a burning room can reach 300°C – three times the temperature of boiling water.

Deadly In most fires, people die from inhaling toxic smoke and gas – not from flames. Carbon monoxide, hydrogen cyanide, ammonia and other irritants could even prevent you from waking up in time.



3 minute PREVENTION



IN THE KITCHEN

- Kitchen fires are the most common type of fire in Alberta homes.
- Never leave your cooking unattended for any reason. If you must leave the kitchen, turn off the heat.
- If a grease fire starts, wear an oven mitt, put a tight-fitting lid on the pan and turn off the heat. Do not move the flaming pan and never throw water on a grease fire.
- Fry foods in a temperature-controlled electric skillet or fryer with a maximum temperature of 200° C.
- Wear tight fitting or rolled up sleeves when using the stove; loose, dangling clothing can easily catch fire.
- Keep a fire extinguisher approved for kitchen use nearby, but away from the stove.
- Keep cooking areas clear of combustibles such as potholders, towels and food packaging.
- Keep pot handles turned inwards. Use the back burners of the stove whenever possible.
- Always keep children and pets away from the stove.
- Keep your oven clean of grease and food particles. If a fire starts, turn the oven off and keep the door closed.
- Use the stove timer to remind you.
- If a fire gets out of control, get out, stay out and call 911.



3 minute PREVENTION



IN THE KITCHEN

Electrical outlets and small appliances

- Never use an appliance with a damaged or frayed cord.
- Unplug appliances when not in use.
- Keep small appliances (toaster, radios) away from the sink.
- Large appliances should be plugged directly into outlets. If that is not possible, use a 14 gauge, three-wire grounding-type appliance extension cord.
- Ensure kitchen and bathroom outlets are protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI), to reduce electrical shock injuries.
- Don't trust heat-producing devices such as automatic coffee makers to turn off automatically.

Microwave

- Always plug a microwave directly into an outlet.
- Ensure your microwave is in good working condition and always follow the cooking instructions.
- Use microwave-safe containers to heat food.
- Never use aluminum foil or metal objects in a microwave.
- If a fire occurs with a microwave, unplug it, if safe to do so, leave the door shut until the fire is out and have it serviced before using it again.

Child Safety

- Keep cords safely out of the reach of small children.
- Store matches and lighters in a child-proof drawer or cabinet.
- Teach children to tell adults if they find matches and lighters so they can be put away safely.
- Teach children that matches and lighters are not toys.

IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM

- Never operate a dryer without a lint filter.
- Check and clean the lint filter before and after dryer use – lint can catch fire.
- Clean lint accumulated inside the dryer exhaust duct and vent regularly.
- Vent the dryer outdoors and avoid putting synthetic fabrics, plastic, rubber or foam into a dryer. They retain heat and can cause a fire.
- Never leave the dryer running when you're not home.
- Plug your dryer directly into a wall outlet.
- Never use a washer or dryer to clean clothes soaked in flammable liquids such as gasoline. An explosion will result.



3 minute PREVENTION



IN THE LIVING ROOM

Electrical outlets

- Never run extension cords under carpet. They can overheat or get damaged, which could result in a fire.
- Extension cords should be used only as a temporary connection.
- Extension cords should not be linked together – instead, use an extension cord that is long enough to do the job.
- Avoid overloading a circuit with “octopus outlets”.
- Watch for electrical overload signals, like dimming lights when heating appliances go on.
- In homes with small children, plug-ins should have plastic safety covers.

Leaving home

- While on vacation, make sure portable heaters are turned off and that household appliances are unplugged.
- If leaving pets at home, make sure there are no fire hazards that can be knocked over.

Lights and lamps

- Use the right bulbs in lamps and light fixtures (look inside the fixture to see the recommended wattage).
- Light bulbs get hot. Never place them near curtains and other flammable items.
- Halogen bulbs are much hotter than ordinary incandescent light bulbs. Never allow a halogen lamp to be placed where it could come into contact with curtains, paper, or other materials that can burn easily.
- Place halogen lamps where children, pets or strong drafts from open windows cannot tip them.
- Never leave a halogen lamp on when you leave the room or your home.

Candles

- Secure candles in a sturdy non-combustible holder, where they can't be knocked over.
- Make sure lit candles are kept out of reach of children and pets, and do not allow children to keep candles or incense in their rooms.
- Keep all combustible materials, including decorative items and wreaths, away from lit candles.
- Remember to blow out any candles before you go out or go to bed.

**Flames and heat
aren't what make
most house fires
deadly.**

It's toxic smoke.

3 minute PREVENTION



AROUND THE HOUSE

Furnaces

- Have your furnace inspected and cleaned regularly.
- Never light a furnace pilot light with a candle.

Fireplaces

- Keep your fire to a manageable size.
- Always have a fire extinguisher close by, and never leave a fire unattended. Keep a metal or heat-tempered glass fireplace screen in place.
- Dispose of fireplace ashes in a closed metal can stored outside.

Smoking

- Careless smoking is the number one cause of home fire deaths.
- Ask smokers to smoke away from upholstered material or encourage them to go outside. Embers can smolder in upholstery cushions for hours before igniting.
- Do not extinguish cigarettes in plant pots. The soil contains peat moss, shredded wood and bark that can easily ignite.
- Use large, deep ashtrays that can't be knocked over.

- Empty ashes into a metal container, not the garbage can. Douse butts with water to be safe.
- Avoid smoking when sleepy or lying down.

Holiday safety

- Make sure Halloween costumes are flame-retardant.
- Keep holiday decorations away from heat sources, including fireplaces and candles.
- Replace all worn, frayed or damaged cords or loose bulbs from trees and decorations.
- Unplug or switch off all decorative lights before going to bed.
- A dry Christmas tree is dangerous and can ignite easily – keep it well-watered.
- Consider purchasing artificial trees and decorations treated with a flame retardant.
- Never put electric lights on metal trees or decorations – doing so creates a serious shock hazard.
- Turkey deep fryers can be very dangerous and are not recommended.



3 minute PREVENTION



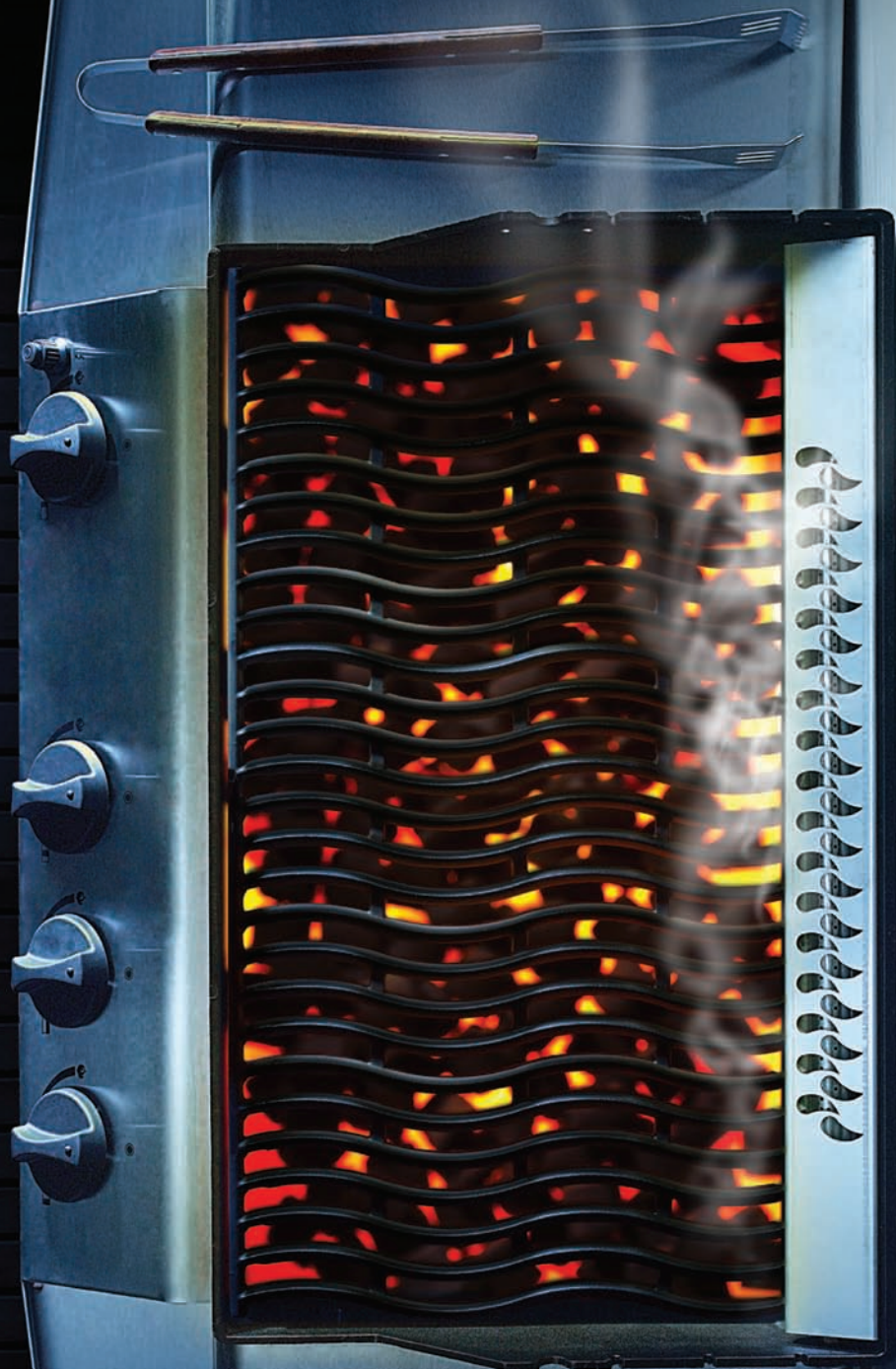
OUTSIDE

Arson prevention

- Take the same precautions as you would to discourage a burglar.
- Prevent entry of intruders by locking doors and securing windows.
- Keep flammable liquids secure and out of sight and reach.
- Have good lighting around your property.
- Remove convenient sources of fuel such as trash and brush piles near your home.
- Keep your garage locked to prevent entry.
- Report suspicious activity to the police.
- Participate in your local Neighborhood Watch Program.

Lawnmower

- Do not refuel equipment while it is still hot.
- Clean up gasoline spills right away. Rinse rags and let them dry outdoors.
- Gasoline vapours can be ignited by an open flame or a spark from a cell phone or electric appliance.



© 2014 The Home Depot. All rights reserved. www.homedepot.com

3 minute PREVENTION



OUTSIDE

The BBQ

- Follow manufacturer's instructions when setting, connecting and lighting a BBQ.
- Keep your BBQ at least one metre (three feet) away from the house or trees.
- At the beginning of the season, make sure the burners are free of rust, dust and cobwebs.
- Check cylinder connections and hoses for leaks by brushing a 50/50 mixture of liquid soap and water on all connections and hoses. Rising bubbles when the gas is turned on indicates a leak.
- To prevent excessive gas build-up, always light the barbecue as soon as the gas flow is turned on.
- Never light a gas barbecue with the lid down. Gas trapped inside can easily ignite and cause the unit to explode.
- Always ensure that the cylinder valves are fully open when barbecue is in use or fully closed when the barbecue is not in use.
- Supervise children around outdoor grills.
- Don't wear loose clothing while barbecuing.
- Never barbecue indoors to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Do not add starter fluid to brickets after the coals have been lit.
- When transporting a propane cylinder, secure it in an upright position with a safety plug (POL plug) in place. A POL plug will prevent gas leakage when the valve is accidentally turned on, and is available through your local dealer.



3 minute DETECTION



SMOKE ALARMS

- Install at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home, including outside of sleeping areas and in the basement. Follow the manufacturers' instructions.
- If you close your bedroom door at night, install additional smoke alarms inside bedrooms.
- Both ionization and photo-electric type smoke alarms are suitable for homes.
- Specially designed smoke alarms for the hearing and visually impaired are available.
- A family's response will be quicker with a newer, interconnected smoke alarm system. This provides early warning of smoke and fire danger anywhere in the house.
- For older homes, a wireless-interconnected smoke alarm system is more cost-effective than hard-wired models.
- When installing hard-wired smoke alarms, consider units with battery backup.

**A smoke alarm buys
you enough time to
escape a fire.**

**At less than \$20,
it is well worth
the money spent.**

3 minute DETECTION



SMOKE ALARMS

Where to install them:

- Installing a hard-wired alarm should be done by a qualified electrician.
- Don't install alarms near drafts that prevent smoke from entering the unit, or near bathrooms and kitchens.

Maintenance:

- Test your smoke alarms once a month by pressing the test button.
- Replace the batteries once a year or when the alarm emits a low battery signal.
- Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.
- Never disable or borrow a battery from a smoke alarm.
- Consider installing smoke alarms with 10-year Lithium batteries.
- Regularly vacuum or dust your alarms, to remove dust and cobweb buildup.
- Never paint a smoke alarm.

Nuisance alarms:

- If the alarm goes off unnecessarily, relocate it farther from kitchens or bathrooms – a few centimetres can reduce a nuisance alarm significantly.
- Keep ovens and stovetop burners clean.
- Clean out crumbs from the toaster bottom and try turning down the timer setting.
- Use the range hood fan to remove smoke or steam from the air.
- Install smoke alarms with a pause or hush feature that will temporarily silence the alarm.
- Never remove the battery or disconnect the smoke alarm to prevent nuisance alarms. Doing so will significantly increase the risk of injury or death.



3 minute DETECTION



FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Types of fire extinguishers

- A fire extinguisher can be used to put out a small fire in its early stages.
- The type of portable extinguisher must match the type of fire you're fighting.
- Class A: fights ordinary combustible fires like wood, cloth and paper.
- Class B: fights fires fueled by flammable liquids like gasoline, oil and paints.
- Class C: fights electrical fires sparked by wiring and appliances.
- Class D: fights fires involving combustible metals such as magnesium.
- Class K: fights commercial cooking oil fires.
- Consider purchasing an approved ULC extinguisher that has an ABC rating. These can be used on most types of domestic fires. Your local fire department can help guide the purchase of extinguishers.
- Secure extinguishers to a wall in a location away from hazards for easy access in case of an emergency.
- Check your extinguisher gauge monthly for proper pressure and get it serviced after each use and every six years.

Using fire extinguishers

Remember the acronym PASS:

- P** Pull the pin
- A** Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire
- S** Squeeze the trigger
- S** Sweep the extinguisher from side to side until it is empty

- Read the instructions before use. If you test it, it will need to be recharged.
- Keep one in the kitchen, basement, and garage out of the reach of children and away from stoves and heating appliances.
- When using an extinguisher, never let the fire get between you and the exit.
- Most fire extinguishers empty in less than 15 seconds. If the fire is not out by then, leave the premises immediately and call 911.
- Service or replace extinguishers after each use.



3 minute DETECTION

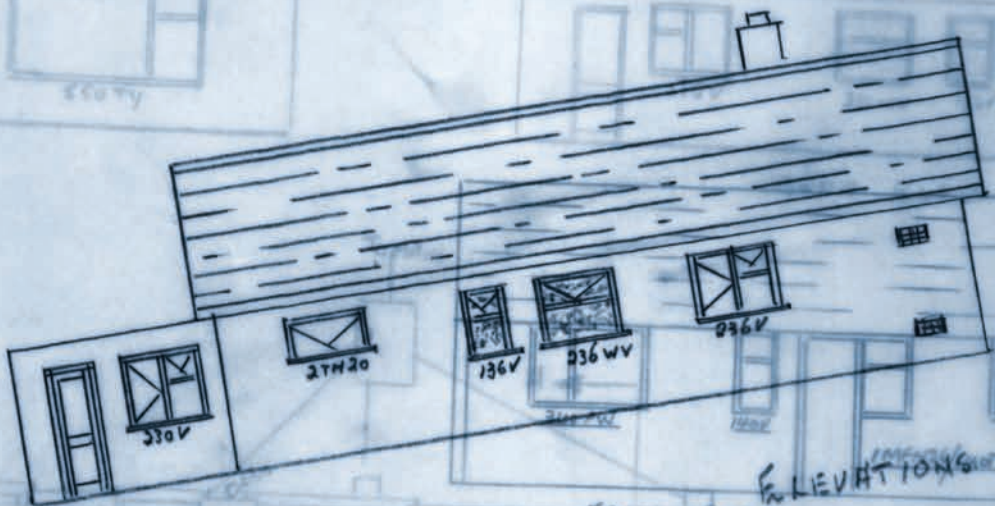


SPRINKLER SYSTEMS

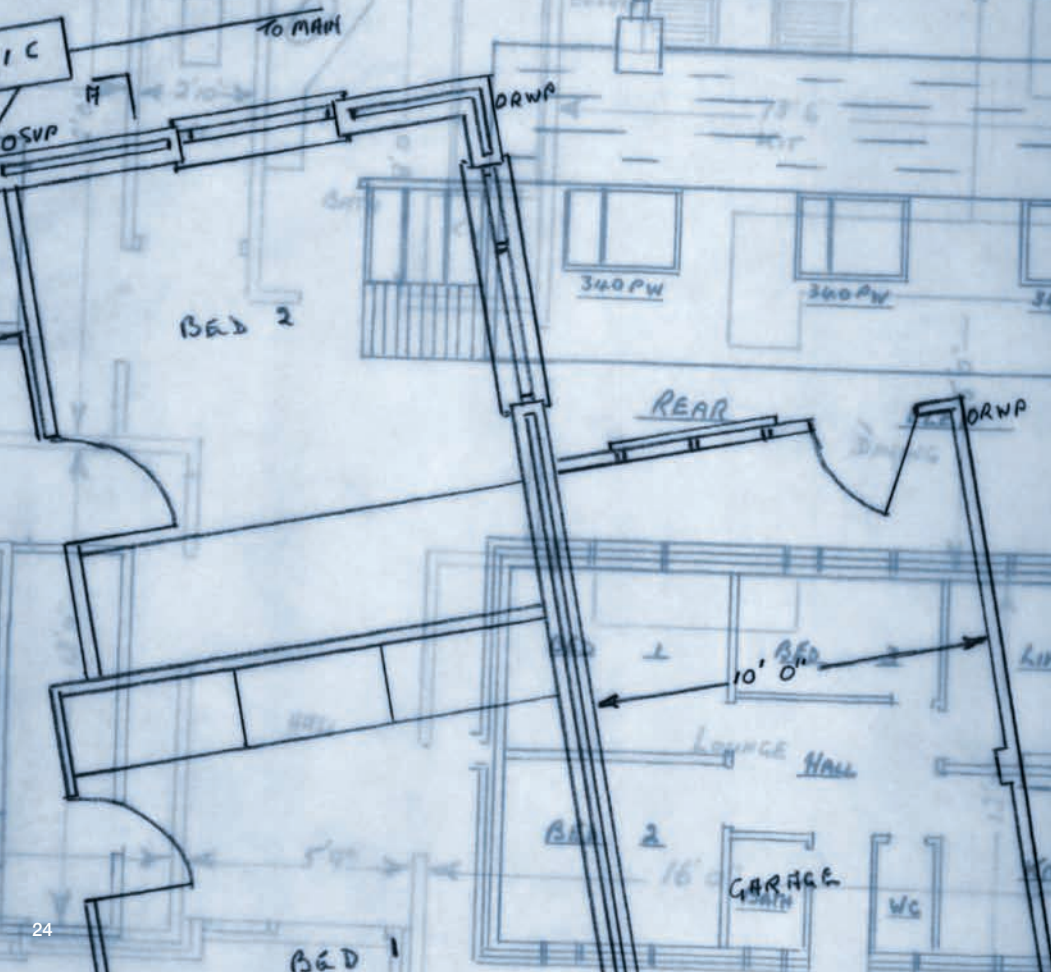
- Sprinklers provide 24 hour protection from fire. They can control, contain or put out fires until the fire department arrives.
- Because sprinklers are triggered by heat and not smoke, only those in the vicinity of the fire will activate to spray water.
- By limiting smoke development and spread, sprinklers give you and your family more time to escape safely.
- Consider installing residential fire sprinklers when purchasing or building a new home.

CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

- Installing a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm will alert you to the presence of this deadly gas, which is colourless and odourless.
- If the alarm sounds, evacuate the home and call 911. Do not re-enter the home until a qualified technician has corrected the problem.
- Sources of CO in the home come from gas or oil furnaces, hot water heaters, gas stoves, fireplaces, wood-stoves, propane fired appliances used indoors, clogged or leaky chimneys, exhaust ducts and vehicle exhaust fumes.
- CO poisoning symptoms include flu-like symptoms, but without a fever, such as headaches, nausea, dizziness, drowsiness, confusion, loss of manual dexterity and even loss of consciousness.
- Install CO alarms (certified by Underwriters' Laboratories to CSA standard) on every level of your home outside sleeping areas, and near rooms with fuel-burning appliances.
- Ensure all fuel-burning appliances operate properly. Have them checked annually at the beginning of the heating season by a qualified technician.
- Never run your vehicle in an attached garage even if the garage door is open. Fumes containing CO will enter your house.
- Life expectancy of a CO alarm ranges between three to seven years.



ELEVATIONS
FRONT ELEV



3 minute ESCAPE PLAN



CREATING A FIRE ESCAPE PLAN

- Involve everyone in drawing a simple floor plan of your home, marking exactly how to get out in a fire emergency.
- Indicate all windows and doors as well as any stairways. Include any features, such as a porch roof or a tree that could help you get out safely.
- Mark two ways out of each bedroom – a main exit (usually the door) and an alternate, such as a window. The second exit must be practical and easy to use.
- Know that when an alarm sounds you have approximately 3 minutes to escape safely.
- Establish a meeting place outside, a safe distance from the house. This helps you to account for everyone and lets firefighters know if anyone is still inside.
- Provide each family member with a copy of the plan and post it on the fridge as well. Do not assume young children, the elderly and the disabled will be awakened by smoke alarms. They should be assisted by an adult during a fire emergency.
- Hold a fire drill once or twice a year – during the day but preferably at night, with your ‘fire’ in different locations. Press the “test” button on your smoke alarm to start your fire drill. This will ensure everyone knows the sound of the smoke alarm and know what to do in a real emergency.

3 minute ESCAPE PLAN

FIRE EVACUATION TIPS:

- Ensure windows are easily opened by children. If windows have security bars, install quick-release devices on the inside.
- Ensure two-storey homes have escape ladders that are accessible.
- In basements, place furniture under the window to aid in escaping.
- Make sure doors and windows are not blocked by furniture or other items.
- Test doors before opening them. Just crack the door open slightly to see the other side.
- Be prepared to slam the door shut if heat or smoke rush in, and look for another way out. If safe, open the door to escape. As you escape, close all doors behind you to hold back toxic smoke and flames.
- If you are trapped, protect yourself until help arrives. Go to a room with an outside window and telephone. Cover the vents. Close the door and seal cracks around the doors with rags or bedding and call 911 to tell them where you are. Wave a flashlight or coloured cloth to help guide them. If possible open the window at the top or bottom; do not break the window unless you have to.
- Get out and stay out. Don't stop to get dressed or gather valuables.
- Get low! Go under the smoke to the nearest exit. Smoke will rise to the ceiling, leaving cooler, cleaner air close to the floor.
- Teach children never to hide in closets or under beds.
- Teach every family member how to 'Stop, Drop and Roll' if clothes catch fire.
- Call 911 once you are outside.

College or university students:

- Ensure you have a fire extinguisher in your room and you know how to use it.
- Take each alarm seriously.
- Do not deactivate nuisance alarms; relocate the smoke alarm if necessary.
- Always know two ways out of the building no matter where you are.
- Check seat cushions after parties for cigarette butts. Ensure cigarette butts are disposed of properly at all times.
- Do not overload extension cords or leave lit candles or cooking unattended.



Seniors and persons with disabilities:

- Make escape easy. Locate bedrooms on the ground floor near an exit.
- Install alarms near sleeping areas.
- If deaf or hard of hearing, install flashing strobe light or vibration along with the alarm.
- Practice a fire drill at least twice a year.
- If you or someone you live with cannot escape alone, designate a member of the household to assist them. Have a back-up plan in case the helper is away at the time of an emergency.
- Keep a telephone and emergency numbers nearby at all times should they be needed.
- Use a flashlight in the event of smoke or to signal firefighters.
- Crouch as low as you can to move through smoke. Stay low and get out.

Heavy sleepers:

- Practice a fire drill at least twice a year to identify if this is a concern in your household.
- Small children, the elderly, sleep deprived students, shift workers, teens, and the hearing impaired all react differently to an emergency. This makes practicing vital.
- Appoint a member of the family to take responsibility for others.

Apartment fires:

- Participate in fire drills conducted by your building management.
- Make sure everyone in your apartment knows and practices the building evacuation plan.
- Know where your building's fire alarm is and how to use it.
- Never prop open or block the exit of a fire door.
- Never use the elevator. If you can't use the stairs, stay in your unit and stay calm. Go to a room with an outside window and telephone. Cover the vents. Close the door and seal cracks around the doors with rags or bedding and call 911 to tell them where you are. Wave a flashlight or coloured cloth to help guide them. If possible open the window at the top or bottom; do not break the window unless you have to.

3 minute QUIZ

1. MOST FIRES OCCUR IN:

- a) homes
- b) offices
- c) outdoors
- d) gas stations

2. IF YOUR CLOTHING CATCHES FIRE, YOU SHOULD:

- a) jump in the shower
- b) run for help
- c) change your clothes
- d) drop to the ground and roll over

3. HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU REPLACE YOUR SMOKE ALARM?

- a) every other year
- b) every 10 years
- c) you don't have to replace alarms, just the batteries
- d) when the smoke alarms sounds a low-battery chirping sound

4. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF A PAN OF HOT COOKING OIL ON THE STOVE CATCHES FIRE?

- a) throw water on it
- b) douse it with flour
- c) put a lid on it to smother the flames
- d) carry it to the sink and turn on the faucet

5. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS THE MOST COMMON CAUSE OF HOME FIRES IN ALBERTA?

- a) careless smoking
- b) unattended cooking
- c) short-circuits in electrical wiring
- d) children playing with fire
- e) improper use of heating equipment



6. HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU TEST A SMOKE ALARM?

- a) never
- b) once a year
- c) once a month
- d) whenever you change the batteries

7. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SHOULD BE INCLUDED ON YOUR HOME EVACUATION PLAN?

- a) two exits from each room
- b) a meeting place outside the home
- c) both of the above

8. WHEN ESCAPING A FIRE, WHAT CAN YOU DO TO SLOW THE SPREAD OF SMOKE/FLAMES?

- a) leave the doors open behind you
- b) close doors as you go
- c) use a fire extinguisher to lay a path of foam
- d) throw water on the fire

9. ONCE A FIRE STARTS, HOW LONG DO YOU HAVE TO ESCAPE SAFELY?

- a) as long as 10 minutes
- b) at least 5 minutes
- c) as little as 3 minutes
- d) time does not matter. The fire department will rescue me.

10. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU CAN'T GET OUT DURING A FIRE?

- a) wait in a room with a window and seal all openings to block smoke
- b) break a window and step out on the ledge
- c) jump from a window
- d) use the nearest elevator



3 minute RESOURCES

Alberta Emergency Management Agency

www.aema.alberta.ca

(Click on the Public Education & Awareness tab)

Tel: 780-422-9000 (310-0000 toll free)

Email: aema@gov.ab.ca

Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research

www.acicr.ualberta.ca

Tel: 780-492-6019

Email: acicr@ualberta.ca

Fire Prevention Canada (FIPRECAN)

www.fiprecan.ca

Tel: 613-749-3844

Email: info@fiprecan.ca

Home Safety Council

www.homesafetycouncil.org

Tel: 202-330-4900

Email: info@homesafetycouncil.org

Canada Safety Council

www.safety-council.org

Tel: 613-739-1535

Email: canadasafetycouncil@safety-council.org

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

www.nfpa.org

Tel: +1-617-770-3000

Fire Kills – You can Prevent it

www.firekills.direct.gov.uk/index.html

Ontario Fire Marshal's Office

www.ofm.gov.on.ca

Tel: 1-800-565-1842

Alberta's Partners in Fire Prevention:

Government of Alberta ■

Alberta's Fire and Emergency Services

Safety Codes Council

Alberta Fire Chiefs Association



3minutedrill.alberta.ca