

# MARYLAND HEIGHTS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

## WHAT TO DO IN A FIRE

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**You are asleep in your bed...**

**You wake up and it is black and smoky...**

**There are deadly gases swirling above your head...**

**Suddenly it is very hot and scary...**

**What do you do???**

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### *What You Can Do to be Prepared*

#### **1. Install Smoke Detectors**

Smoke Detectors will warn you of a fire in the early stages and give you a few precious minutes to escape safely.

#### **2. Have a Well-Practiced Escape Plan.**

An escape plan should include:

- two ways out from each room;
- means to help the young, elderly and people with disabilities to escape safely;
- somewhere to meet safely outside; and
- how to call the fire service on 911 from a safe telephone.

#### **3. Practice...**

- crawling all the escape routes;
- opening the doors and windows to be used in an escape;
- opening locks;
- helping the young, elderly, and people with disabilities to escape; and
- going to the agreed meeting place.

### *What You Should do in a REAL FIRE Situation*

**Life Safety is the most important consideration – Escape must be the first action!**

As soon as a smoke alarm sounds, everyone should leave by one of the pre-determined escape routes. A moment's delay to collect valuables can seriously reduce your chances of a safe escape.

## **Crawl Low Under Smoke**

Hot smoke and gases rise, so the clearest air can be found at ground level. Keep as low as possible to the ground as you make your escape.

## **Close Doors**

Closed doors help prevent further spread of flames and smoke. As you leave the house, shut the doors behind you.

## **Use the Stairs**

In flats and apartment buildings the elevator is not a safe operation. The elevator car can become stuck or open up at the fire area. Stairwells are designed with safety features such as fire doors to ensure a safe escape route.

## **Test All Doors Before Opening**

Before opening any door, test it for heat by feeling it with the back of your hand. If the door is hot, do not open it. If the door is warm, open it slowly. If smoke comes in, close it immediately. If there is no smoke, you may proceed out the door. When opening any door, remember to use your body to brace the door to avoid it being blown open.

## **What to Do When Trapped**

When trapped in a room, the cracks around the door can be plugged with rugs or bedding to stop smoke from filtering in. The window may be the only means of escape. If this is not possible because it is too high, shouting and waving a brightly colored item will alert those outside to the situation.

## **Care for Others**

Young children, the handicapped and the elderly need to have someone appointed to take responsibility for them during an emergency. It is imperative that anyone who may take care of them (such as a babysitter) be familiar with all aspects of the exit drill.

## **Practice**

It is not enough to plan a drill, it requires going through the actions to ensure it can realistically work. Regular practice will help ensure actions become automatic.

## **Get Out – Stay Out**

Do not attempt to re-enter a burning structure. Once everyone is safely outside, no one should re-enter the structure. Let the firefighters deal with the fire.

## **Calling the Fire Service**

In the Maryland Heights Fire Protection District and throughout the St. Louis metropolitan area, the emergency phone number is 911. Remember to call from a neighbor's house.

### **Only if is safe...**

In certain circumstances, when the fire is very small, it may be possible to successfully extinguish the fire. Smothering burning pots with a lid and closing the door on an oven fire are examples of early firefighting measures. Should fire extinguishers be in the home they should only be used if it is safe to do so, the house has been totally evacuated and the Fire Service has been called.