

# Do You Know What to Do If a Fire Breaks Out at Home?



The statistics are alarming.

A home fire happens every 86 seconds, yet half of parents say their children wouldn't know what to do if their smoke alarm went off.

No workplace or home is fireproof, and with Oct. 8 to 14 being observed as National Fire Prevention Week, the MTA's Safety Management Office is reminding all employees to take precautions year-round to remain safe from smoldering or fast-moving blazes.

While the MTA conducts frequent fire drills for all employees, few Americans perform such drills at home. And each day across the United States, seven people on average die in fires at home.

So this year's Fire Prevention Week is focusing on fire safety at home. This year's theme, "Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out," reminds the public that planning for potential trouble on the home front can save lives.

## The Importance of Safety Drills

In a typical home fire, you may have as little as one to two minutes from the time the smoke alarm sounds to escape safely. That's why home escape planning is critical.

"Developing and practicing a home escape plan is like building muscle memory," said Chris Diodato, the MTA's director of Employee Safety and Health Programs and Standards. "We know how important it is to hold safety drills at work. That same kind of pre-planning at home is just as important. It's what everyone in your household will draw upon to snap into action and escape as quickly as possible in the event of a fire."

That's why Saturday, the last day of Fire Prevention Week, has been designated Home Fire Drill Day, and Diodato encourages MTA employees to perform fire drills at home on that day. [Visit HomeFireDrillDay.com](http://HomeFireDrillDay.com) for pointers on how to get your children involved.

**Below are some of that website's home fire escape tips for families:**

- Plan a fire drill that is two minutes long – or about the length of the commercials shown during your children’s favorite TV shows.
- Because many home fires occur at night, it’s especially important to practice your drills in the dark. Make sure your family can get to a safe meeting place you have identified away from your home.
- Provide incentives for your children to participate in the drills by awarding prizes for the first child who reaches the safe place within two minutes.
- Don’t forget to change the batteries in your smoke alarms and test the alarms with your children so they know the sound.
- Teach children how to escape on their own in case you can’t help them.
- Once you get outside, stay outside. Never go back inside a burning building.

**And here are some basic fire safety tips that every employee should know:**

- Keep passageways, stairwells and fire doors free of obstructions.
- Keep obstructing objects at least 18 inches (24 to 36 inches is recommended) away from automatic sprinklers, fire extinguishers and sprinkler controls.
- Don’t overload electrical circuits. Turn off machines at the end of the day and report electrical hazards immediately.

**[Click HERE for even more home fire safety tips.](#)**