



# After the Fire...

A guide to help you and your  
family through the next few  
days...



Prepared by the Milton Fire Department

## [Index](#)

1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Important Information.....	3
3.	First 24 Hours.....	4
4.	Fire Extinguishment.....	4
5.	Unable to Stay in Your House.....	6
6.	Insurance.....	7
7.	Coping with Disaster.....	8
8.	Utilities.....	8
9.	Care of Documents.....	9
10.	Helping Pets.....	9
11.	Salvage & Restoration Tips.....	10
12.	Shelter in Place.....	13
13.	YOUR Emergency Numbers .....	14
14.	Contact Numbers.....	16
15.	Fire Safety Information.....	17

## Introduction

The Town of Milton Fire Department has prepared "After the Fire" to assist you and your family in the first few days that follow a fire emergency. We hope that you never experience a fire in your lifetime, but if you do, the following information will assist you in your recovery effort.

Fire can cause considerable damage to homes and their contents; however, post-fire conditions, such as allowing standing water to accumulate, can create serious consequences as well. It is important to take immediate and appropriate action.

This plan can also be used as a tool for everyday fire and life safety in your family setting. Additional fire safety information is provided on what you can do to help make you and your family safer from fire in the future.

## Important Information At This Time

Do not enter the damaged structure or site. It may be unsafe at this time to enter the structure due to reduced structural integrity (damaged flooring and walls), poor air quality, and smoldering remains. Wait until the Fire Department's Incident Commander or investigating Fire Prevention Officer has given you permission to enter the property.

Note: In some situations, the determination of the cause and the origin of the fire may be under investigation and it may be unlawful for you or your insurance personnel to enter without permission.

As it may be unsafe for you to enter the building or specific areas within the building, fire fighters may either retrieve some of your important documents or assist you with safe entry into the building for you to recover immediately important valuables. This will assist you with your recovery in the first 24 hours.

Normally, the fire department will see that utilities (water, electricity and natural gas) are either safe to use or are disconnected before they leave the site. Do not attempt to turn on utilities yourself.

Be watchful for structural damage caused by the fire. Roofs and floors may be damaged and subject to collapse.

**CAUTION**  
**Food, beverage and medicine exposed to heat, smoke, soot and water should NOT be consumed.**

## The First 24 Hours

A. The first 24 hours will be a very important early step in sorting out and reducing the damage that has occurred. It is important that you attend to specific concerns as soon as you are able. Some of these concerns may be:

- Temporary housing
- Food
- Medicine
- Eyeglasses
- Clothing (appropriate for the weather)
- Other essential items

Your local disaster relief service such as the Canadian Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the Halton Social Services – Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Halton, may be contacted to help with your immediate needs. Their contact numbers are as follows:

- Canadian Red Cross – 905-875-1459 or 1-888-890-1997
- Salvation Army – 905-875-1022
- Big Brothers/Sisters of Halton – 905-339-2355

B. Ensure that you can account for all family members or other home occupants. This includes those who are at work, childcare services and extracurricular activities such as after school games and lessons.

C. Have all injuries treated by medical personnel, remain calm and pace yourself. You may be taking charge of the situation, listen carefully to family members needs, what people around you are saying and deal with the urgent situations first.

D. Contact your insurance agents/companies for assistance. This includes health, auto, property and, if applicable, pet insurance companies.

E. Contact utility companies to ensure that requirements are attended to: can the electricity be reconnected or are you allowed to run an extension cord from a neighbouring house's supply to maintain electricity for fridges, freezers, furnaces, etc.?

F. Leaving Your Home:

- In some cases it will be necessary to board up openings to discourage trespassers. This should be done by your insurance company.
- Owners through their insurance company will be responsible for security of the property.

G. Beginning immediately, save receipts for any money you spend. These receipts are important in showing the insurance company what money you have spent related to your fire loss and also for verifying losses claimed on your income tax.

H. If fire damage is substantial, contact the Town of Milton to request an Assessment at 905-878-7211 ext. 2193.

## Fire Extinguishment

Modern day firefighting involves many special techniques. Some of these techniques may appear not to be necessary and you may ask questions such as: Why are there broken windows and doors, or holes in the roof?

Fire produces temperatures in the building well over 1200 degrees Fahrenheit, along with smoke and hot gasses. At times it is necessary to eliminate the heat, smoke, and hot gases by ventilation before firefighters can enter to extinguish the fire. Ventilation may also be

accomplished quickly to help reduce fire spread. The result of this action is less damage to the structure in the long run.

Often firefighters must forcibly open walls and ceilings to find any "hidden" fire, allowing for complete fire extinguishment.

After the fire is out, this type of damage may appear unnecessary. However, without the use of these firefighting techniques, extinguishing the fire would be much more difficult and smoke and fire damage would be more excessive.



The fire department may not allow you into the property until they are sure that all the hazards have been removed. These hazards may include:

- Smoke & heat
- Hazardous gases & Materials
- Falling debris
- Trip or fall hazards



## Unable to Stay in Your Home?

### **IF you are unable to stay in your home:**

1. Remove as many valuables as possible. The home owner may temporarily be denied access to certain articles, areas, or the entire structure until the scene is studied and released by Milton Fire Department. This does not imply suspicion; rather it is our policy to attempt to find the cause of all fires. Be sure to inventory what is removed.
2. Check your residence for important legal documents which may have been damaged.
3. For those individuals in need, assistance from the Canadian Red Cross and/or the Salvation Army is available. Temporary accommodations, emergency financial assistance and grocery assistance may be obtained. Call Halton Family Services at 905-825-6000.
4. Try to locate the following items to take with you: personal identification, eyeglasses, hearing aids, credit cards, cheque books, insurance policies, jewelry and vital medicines, such as blood pressure regulating medications or insulin. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any medication. If it was exposed to heat, it may not be safe.
5. If the building is structurally damaged, a Building Inspector from the Town of Milton must be called at 905-878-7211. After the building inspection is complete, a permit must be obtained prior to making repairs.

### **If it is safe to do so, try to locate the following items:**

- ❖ Identification such as driver's licenses and Social Insurance Cards
- ❖ Financial information such as bank and credit cards.
- ❖ Property and medical insurance information
- ❖ Medication information for all family members
- ❖ Eyeglasses, hearing aids and other prosthetic devices
- ❖ Valuables such as credit cards, bank books, cash and jewelry.

### **There are many people/entities that should be notified of your relocation, including:**

- Your insurance agent/company
- Your mortgage company (also inform them of the fire)
- Your family and friends
- Your employer
- Your children's school
- Your post office
- Any delivery service
- Your fire and police departments
- Your utility companies

Do not throw away any damaged goods until after an inventory is made. All damages are taken into consideration in developing your insurance claim.

If you are considering contracting out for inventory or repair services, discuss your plans with your insurance agent/company first.

## **Property Insurance**

Contact your local company or agent as soon as possible. If you are renting or leasing the property, you must also contact the owner. Your insurance adjuster may be able to assist you in making immediate repairs or help to secure your home. If you are unable to contact your agent and need professional assistance in boarding up your home, a general contractor or a fire damage restoration firm can help. Check the yellow pages. If your property is not insured or if your insurance will not cover all of your losses, contact your family lawyer for directions on what to do.

**(Note: There are helpful contact numbers on page 16 of this booklet)**

### **IF YOU ARE INSURED:**

- Give notice of the loss to the insurance company.
- Ask the insurance company what to do about the immediate needs of the dwelling such as: covering doors, windows and other exposed areas and pumping out water.
- Ask your insurance agent/company what actions are required of you. Some policyholders may be required to make an inventory of damaged personal property showing in detail the quantity, description and how much you paid for the items.
- Remember to record names, contact numbers, etc. of people you have been dealing with and their answers to your questions.
- It is the insurance company's responsibility to secure the property after the fire has been extinguished. In some situations the fire department will secure the property by boarding up damaged openings such as doors and windows. This cost may be returned to the homeowner.

### **IF YOU ARE NOT INSURED:**

- Your recovery from a fire loss may be based upon your own resources and help from your community.
- Normally it is the insurance company's responsibility to secure the property after the fire has been extinguished. In some situations the fire department may secure the property by boarding up damaged openings such as doors and windows, but ultimately this is YOUR responsibility. If the Fire Department undertakes to do this, costs may be returned to the homeowner.

Private organizations that may be sources of aid or information:

- Canadian Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Religious organizations
- Halton Region Social Services
- Community organizations
- Non-profit crisis counseling centers

## Coping with a Disaster

After a fire, you may experience some of the following reactions: anxious feelings, depression, difficulty concentrating, sadness, anger, fatigue, hopelessness, irrational (unfounded) fears and nightmares. These are common responses to a traumatic event. There are agencies in our area that can help you work through the crisis. Contact Halton Region Social Services offices. If you are a member of a church congregation, your parish priest or minister may also be of some assistance.

- Recognize that the way you react to this event is not unusual
- Try not to make big life changes
- Talk to family members and friends
- Listen to one another and help each other with daily tasks
- Try to achieve a balance between rest and activity
- Seek counseling to help cope with the emotional trauma associated with disasters

### **Children and Emergencies:**

Children's fears and anxieties are very real to them and should be taken seriously. Here is how parents can help:

- Encourage children to express themselves through play or drawing
- Take their fears seriously, talk about what happened, and what's being done
- Comfort young children with physical care, holding and hugging
- Keep the family together as much as possible
- Give children information that they can understand



## Utilities

In some situations, to prevent further damage to the structure and its contents, the Milton Fire Department will have some utility service shut off or disconnected as a safety precaution. Please contact the following services for reconnection:

### **Electricity:**

An Electrical Inspector must check the wiring to be sure it is safe before the power can be reconnected. Milton Hydro will assist you with the electrical needs up to your buildings' electrical meter, usually located on the external wall of a single family residential building. Your electrical contractor with the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) will be responsible for electrical code requirements from the meter through the building. An electrical permit to carry out work after a fire is required.

Do not operate wet or damp appliances. Have service personnel or electrician check them first.



**Water:**

This utility may be turned back on by the resident. Use caution, as the fire may have damaged the plumbing which may cause water damage to occur once the pipes are refilled. Contact the Halton Region Public Works (Water) Department or a licensed plumber.

**Gas:**

DO NOT turn the gas back on. A Gas Inspector must check the piping, etc., to be sure it is safe, before you restart gas appliances. Gas or oil appliances such as furnaces are inspected by the TSSA or approved service personnel.

**Telephone/Cable/Satellite/Internet:**

Contact your provider.

Check each telephone to see if it is still on the hook. Hang up any phones that may have been knocked off. Wait a few minutes and then pick up one phone to listen for a dial tone to know whether you have working telephone service.

If you do not have a dial tone, try unplugging all of the telephones. Plug in one at a time and listen for a dial tone. This will help you to determine if the telephone instrument is broken or the phone service is completely out. If the service is out, contact the telephone company using a cellular telephone or a neighbour's phone to report the problem and to request repair.

**(Note: There are helpful contact numbers at the end of this booklet)**

## Care of Documents

It is wise to store all important documents in an approved fireproof container that is specifically designed for such purposes.



If paper documents are wet, freeze them immediately! When copies are needed, simply allow them to thaw, lift off each page as it thaws and photocopy. Contact a professional fire restoration company for assistance.

## Helping Pets

If you have pets, try to find and comfort them. A scared animal may react by biting or scratching. Handle animals carefully and calmly.

Pets can become upset and react in unusual ways such as spraying urine, defecating on floors or scratching/biting furniture. Since pets will need regular care and attention to help them calm down, try to leave pets with a family member, friend, veterinarian or boarding facility while you are cleaning up your home. Animals are naturally inquisitive and could be injured if they are brought back to a damaged home.

- Use toys, a blanket or favorite human's unsoiled clothing to comfort pets
- Make sure pets are fed their usual diet and have plenty of water
- Visit your pets regularly, speak calmly and take some time out to play with them. Doing so can also help you in your recovery as well.



## Salvage & Restoration Tips

### **Cleaning Household Textiles, Clothing, Appliances and Documents:**

Fires cause considerable damage to homes and their contents; however, "after the fire" activities can cause more damage. It is important to take immediate, appropriate action. Carpets, draperies, upholstered furniture and clothing usually can be refurbished after a fire, except for scorched or severely water damaged items.

Fire creates two types of smoke damage – the **visible soot** and the **invisible odour**. Because each fire is different, it is not possible to provide one set of guidelines for removing soot and odour. For example, smoke odour from wood could react differently to certain cleaning products than smoke odour from plastics. It is usually difficult for inexperienced home owners to remove soot and odours without professional assistance or advice.

To effectively remove soot and smoke damage, it is necessary to use the appropriate chemicals, the right equipment and judgment that comes from experience. Professional fire restorers, properly trained, have the knowledge and materials to refurbish household textiles after a fire.

The most important guideline for homeowners to remember is not to begin cleaning until the visible soil and smoke odour are removed. Experts can be identified through insurance agents.

Damaged clothing in closets and drawers can usually be restored by home cleaning methods. Research results indicate that home laundry methods are most effective for the majority of washable fabrics and dry cleaning is of limited effectiveness.

Please note that the information provided below is a guide from best practices and will not guarantee that the item cleaned will not be damaged. It is always best to contact a professional for assistance with this matter.

- **Clothing** – Smoke odour and soot sometimes can be washed from clothing. The following formula often will work for clothing that can be bleached:

4-6 tbsp. of tri-sodium phosphate (TSP)  
 1 cup Lysol or any household chlorine bleach  
 1 gallon of warm water

Mix well, add clothes, and rinse with cold water and dry well.

Be aware that tri-sodium phosphate is a caustic substance used as a cleaning agent. It should be used with care and be stored out of the reach of children and pets. Wear rubber gloves when using it. Read the label carefully. To remove mildew, wash the fresh stain with soap and water. Then rinse and dry it in the sun. If the stain has not disappeared, use lemon juice and salt or a diluted solution of household chlorine bleach.

- **Cooking Utensils** – Your pots, pans, flatware, etc., should be washed with soapy water, rinsed and then polished with a fine-powdered cleaner. You can polish copper and brass with special polish, salt sprinkled on a piece of lemon or salt sprinkled on a cloth saturated with vinegar.
- **Electrical Appliances** – Appliances that have been exposed to water and steam should not be used until you have a service representative check them. This is especially true of electrical appliances. In addition, steam can remove the lubricant from some moving parts. If the fire department turned off your gas or power during the fire, call the electric or gas company to restore these services – DO NOT TRY TO DO IT YOURSELF.
- **Food** – Wash your canned goods in detergent and water. Do the same for food in jars. If labels come off, be sure you mark the contents on the can or jar with a grease pencil. Do not use canned goods when cans have bulged or are dented or rusted.

If your home freezer has stopped running, you can still save the frozen food. Keep the freezer closed. Your freezer has enough insulation to keep food frozen for at least one day – perhaps for as many as two or three days. Move your food to a neighbour's freezer or to a rented locker. Wrap the frozen food in newspapers and blankets or use insulated boxes. Do not re-freeze food that has been thawed.

To remove odour from your refrigerator or freezer, wash the inside with a solution of baking soda and water, or use one cup of vinegar or household ammonia to one gallon of water. Some baking soda in an open container or a piece of charcoal can be placed in the refrigerator or freezer to absorb odour.

- **Flooring and Rugs** - When water gets under linoleum, it can cause odours and warp the wood floor. If this happens, remove the entire sheet. If the linoleum is brittle, a heat lamp will soften it so it can be rolled up without breaking. If carefully removed, it can be re-cemented after the floor has completely dried. Small blisters in linoleum can be punctured with a nail and re-cemented if you are careful. Dilute regular linoleum paste thin enough to go through a syringe and shoot adhesive through the nail hole. Weigh down the linoleum with bricks or boards. It is usually possible to cement loose tiles of any type. Wait until the floor is completely dry before beginning.

Rugs and carpets also should be allowed to dry thoroughly. Throw rugs then can be cleaned by beating, sweeping or vacuuming and then shampooing. Rugs should be dried as quickly as possible. Lay them flat and expose them to a circulation of warm, dry air. A fan turned on the rugs will speed drying. Make sure the rugs are thoroughly dry. Even if the surface seems dry; moisture remaining at the base of the tufts can quickly rot a rug. For information on cleaning and preserving carpets, call your carpet dealer, installer or qualified carpet cleaning professional.

**Mattresses and Pillows** – Reconditioning an innerspring mattress at home is very difficult, if not impossible. Your mattress may be able to be renovated by a company that builds or repairs mattresses. If you must use your mattress temporarily, put it out into the sun to dry. Then cover it with rubber or plastic sheeting. It is almost impossible to get smoke odour out of pillows. The feathers and foam retain the odour.

**Leather and Books** – Wipe leather goods with a damp cloth, then a dry cloth. Stuff purses and shoes with newspaper to retain shape. You can use steel wool or a suede brush on suede. Rinse leather and suede jackets in cold water and dry away from heat and sun.

Wet books must be taken care of as soon as possible. The best method to save wet books is to freeze them in a vacuum freezer. This special freezer will remove the moisture without damaging the pages.

If there will be a delay in locating such a freezer, put them in a normal freezer until a vacuum freezer can be located.

**Locks and Hinges** – Locks (especially iron locks) should be taken apart, wiped and lubricated with machine oil. If locks cannot be removed, squirt machine oil through a bolt opening or keyhole and work the knob to distribute the oil. Hinges should also be thoroughly cleaned and oiled.

**Walls and Furniture** – To remove soot and smoke from the walls, non fabric furniture and floors, mix together:

4 to 6 tbsp. tri-sodium phosphate  
1 cup Lysol or any chloride bleach  
1 gallon warm water

Wear rubber gloves when cleaning. After washing the article, rinse with clear warm water and dry thoroughly.

Walls may be washed down while wet. Use a mild soap or detergent. Wash a small area at one time, working from the floor up. Then rinse the wall with clear water immediately. Ceilings should be washed last. Do not repaint until the wall and ceiling are completely dry.

Wallpaper can also be repaired. Use a commercial paste to reattach loose edges or sections. Contact your wallpaper dealer or installer for information on wallpaper cleaners. Washable wallpaper can be washed like an ordinary wall, but care must be taken not to soak the paper. Work from bottom to top to prevent streaking.

Do not dry your furniture in the sun. The wood will warp and twist out of shape. Clean off the mud and dirt by scrubbing with a stiff brush and a cleaning solution. You can also rub the wood surface with a 4/0 steel wool pad dipped in liquid polishing wax, wipe with a soft cloth and then buff. Remove the drawers and let them dry thoroughly so there will be no sticking when you replace them. Wet wood can decay and mold, so allow it to dry thoroughly. Open doors and windows for good ventilation. Turn on your furnace or air conditioner, if necessary. If mold forms, wipe the wood with a damp cloth soaked in a mixture of borax dissolved in hot water. To remove white spots or film, rub the wood surface with a cloth soaked in a solution of a half cup of household ammonia and a half cup of water. Wipe dry and polish with wax or rub the surface with a cloth soaked in a solution of half cup turpentine and half a cup of linseed oil. Be careful because turpentine is combustible.

**Money Replacement** – Handle burned money as little as possible. Attempt to encase each bill or portion of a bill in plastic wrap for preservation. Ask your personal bank manager for assistance.

## Shelter in Place

***This section provides information on “Shelter in Place” – a protective measure to keep your family safe in the event of a community wide emergency. This is for information purposes only and may not be required under normal fire conditions.***

Your response to an emergency involving a hazardous spill or fire from the spill should be the same as in all other emergencies except for the following:

- You may be evacuated. Listen to instructions from local emergency response officials.
- Be prepared to “Shelter in Place”. Shelter in Place is the going or remaining indoors during the release of an airborne hazardous material, as opposed to evacuating the area.

### **Things to Do**

- Move out of the path of smoke or fumes to seek shelter indoors. DO NOT attempt to go through smoke or fumes.
- Seek shelter in a house or automobile and remain indoors. (This can reduce your exposure to 1/10 of that outdoors.) Close all doors and windows. Shut down air conditioners, fans, etc., which bring in outside air. Close all interior doors so that you “compartmentalize” your house.
- Do not use bathroom vents or kitchen vents.
- Set thermostats so air conditioners, furnaces and hot water heaters will **not** come on.
- Cover window openings with plastic held by duct-tape. You may want to pre-cut pieces of plastic for this purpose.
- Do not use fireplaces. Close all dampers.
- Do not operate clothes dryer.
- Turn on and monitor your radio or television or internet for additional information and instructions.
- Wet towels under the doors will do much to prevent the entry of smoke and/or fumes into the relatively airtight homes of today.
- If fumes threaten you, cover your mouth and nose with a wet handkerchief or towel.
- Evacuate if only told to do so. In the short term, staying indoors with the house closed up is the most effective action you can take.
- Stay away from the emergency area. You may hinder rescue and recovery efforts.
- Monitor local media for information on any emergency and public emergency news releases as to when it is safe to return home and for other post-incident advice and assistance. Drive carefully and watch for notification of debris, dangling or broken wires, damaged bridges and roads. Report problems to fire or police departments.

## Your Emergency Numbers

*Please fill this area in with your local phone numbers and keep copies at locations other than your home.*

EMERGENCY CONTACT

POISON CONTROL

OHIP NUMBERS (ALL FAMILY)

DOCTORS

DENTIST

INSURANCE COMPANY

MEDICAL POLICY NUMBER

HOME POLICY NUMBER

AUTO POLICY NUMBER

GAS/FUEL COMPANY

MUNICIPALITY

BANKS

NEIGHBOURS

ACCOUNTANT

FAMILY

RED CROSS

SHELTER/ASSISTANCE

PHARMACY

WORK NUMBERS

## NON-EMERGENCY Contact Numbers

### Town of Milton

- Main Number 905-878-7252
- Planning & Development (building) 905-878-7252 ext. 2398
- Engineering Services 905-878-7252 ext. 2500
- Fire Department 905-878-9251
- Fire Prevention 905-878-9251 ext. 2810
- Fire Safety Education 905-878-9251 ext. 2815
- Milton Hydro 905-876-4611
- Humane Society (Oakville) 905-845-1551
- Transit 905-815-2020

### Region of Halton

Main Number 905-825-6000  
*INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE FOR ALL REGIONAL MATTERS SUCH AS FINANCIAL, CLOTHING, HOUSING, ETC CALL THE MAIN NUMBER AT ANY TIME AND SPEAK TO AN INTAKE STAFF MEMBER.*

#### Halton Regional Police Services

Main Number 905-878-5511

#### Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)

Main Number (Burlington) 905-681-2511  
Halton (toll free) 1-800-263-4242

#### Ambulance Services (EMS)

Main Number 905-844-4242

#### Halton Regional Conservation Authority

Main Number 905-336-1158

#### Roman Catholic School Board

Main Number 905-632-6300

#### Public School Board

Main Number 905-335-3665

#### Milton District Hospital

Main Number 905-878-2383

#### United Way of Milton

Main Number 905-875-2550

#### Electrical Standards Authority – ESA

Main Number 1-877-372-7233 (*permits only & after hours.*)

#### Halton Multicultural Council

Main Number 905-815-2046



## FIRE SAFETY INFORMATION

### Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors save lives...  
....but only if they are working properly.

- Remember, *change your clocks, change your batteries.*
- Use only batteries recommended by the manufacture of the alarm or detector.
- Do not use rechargeable batteries.
- Test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors monthly.
- Clean your alarms and detectors frequently by gentle vacuuming.

---

PLEASE NOTE: ON MARCH 1, 2006 NEW SMOKE ALARM REQUIREMENTS CAME INTO EFFECT IN ONTARIO

Every home in Ontario must have a working smoke alarm on every storey and outside all sleeping areas. IT'S THE LAW.

#### Homeowners:

It is the responsibility of homeowners to install and maintain smoke alarms on every storey of their home and outside sleeping areas.

#### Landlords:

It is the responsibility of landlords to ensure their rental properties comply with the law.

#### Tenants:

If you are a tenant of a rental property and do not have the required number of smoke alarms, contact your landlord immediately. It is against the law for tenants to remove the batteries or tamper with the alarm in any way.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE FIRE CODE SMOKE ALARM REQUIREMENTS COULD RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT FINES AND IN SOME CASES JAIL.

- When installing smoke alarms, refer to the manufacturer's instructions for information about correct placement.
- Test your smoke alarms every month using the test button.
- Replace smoke alarm batteries at least once a year and whenever the low-battery warning chirps.
- Smoke alarms don't last forever. Replace smoke alarms with new ones if they are more than 10 years old.
- Steam from the shower or cooking in the oven, stove or toaster can cause smoke alarms to activate. DO NOT REMOVE THE BATTERY. Instead, try moving the alarm to a different location or purchase a smoke alarm with a hush feature that will temporarily silence the alarm. For further information about dealing with nuisance alarms, visit the OFM website; [www.ofm.gov.on.ca](http://www.ofm.gov.on.ca)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SMOKE ALARMS, CONTACT US AT 905-878-9251.

## Create Your Own Evacuation & Safety Plan

### 1. Draw a floor plan of your home.

Use a grid to draw a floor plan of your home. You should draw a floor plan for each floor of your home.

### 2. Include all possible emergency exits.

Draw in all walls, windows, doors and stairs. This will show you and your family all possible escape routes at a glance.

### 3. Include any important features that could help with your escape.

Doors and window are escape exits from your home. Are there any other features that could help you get out safely? Can you climb out a window onto the roof of a porch or garage? These feature can be extremely useful in an emergency, however you must make sure that all escape routes are practical and useable.

### 4. Mark two escape rooms from each room.

There is a main exit from each room. This will be the exit to use if there is no apparent danger. If you are unable to use the main exit because of smoke, or fire, you must have an alternative exit. The second exit us usually the window. Special consideration should be given to planning escape routes from the bedrooms as most fires occur at night when everyone is sleeping. This second exit must be practical and easy to use. Make sure that the occupant of that bedroom is able to use the second exit.

### 5. Remember – some people may need help to escape.

Decide in advance who will assist the very young, elderly or physically challenged members of your household. A few minutes of planning will save valuable seconds in a real emergency.

### 6. Choose a place outside where everyone will meet.

Choose a meeting place that everyone will remember. It is a good idea to choose a spot at the front of your home or close to your neighbour's house. Everyone must know to go directly to this meeting place so they can be accounted for. No one should go back into a burning building for any reason.

### 7. Call the fire department from a neighbour's home.

Once at the meeting place, someone can be sent to the neighbour's home to call the fire department. Include the neighbour's name and the fire department phone number on your plan. Mark the street address of your home on your fire escape plan; always keep the Fire Department number by your own phone in case a neighbour needs to call.



**8. Make sure everyone is familiar with the home escape plan.**

Go over the entire plan with everyone. Discuss primary and secondary escape routes from each bedroom. Ensure that all children know the plan. Walk through the escape routes for each room with the entire family. Use this walk-through exercise to check your escape routes, making sure all exits are practical and easy to use.

It is important that all windows will open and that no heavy furniture blocks any escape route. If escape ladders or ropes are to be used, make sure that they are area accessible and that the appropriate individual is capable of using them.

**9. Practice your escape plan.**

After reviewing the floor plan with the members of your household, have an actual practice to ensure that everyone knows what to do. Practice your escape plan every six months. In a real fire, you must react without hesitation as your escape routes may be quickly blocked by smoke or flames. Your practice drills will ensure that everyone knows what to do when fire strikes.

**10. Test your smoke alarm at least once a month.**



**WORKING SMOKE ALARMS IN YOUR HOME WILL INCREASE  
YOUR CHANCES OF SURVIVING A FIRE!**