

Safety **TIPS** from Portland Fire & Rescue's **Prevention Division**

An information resource for citizens

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High Rise Safety

Fatal fires in high rise structures have prompted Americans to rethink fire safety. A key to fire safety for those who live and work in these types of structures is to practice fire safety and prevention behaviors specific to high rises.

To prevent the loss of life and property in high rise fires, follow these simple safety steps:

BE PREPARED

- Do not lock fire exits, doorways, halls, or stairways. Fire doors provide a way out during a fire and can actually slow the spread of fire and smoke. Do not prop stairway or other fire doors open.
- Get to know your building evacuation plan. If the fire alarm sounds, would you know what to do? Plan and practice your escape plan so it's second nature.
- It is the responsibility of the building manager to post evacuation plans. Make sure the plans are viewable in high traffic areas such as lobbies.
- Do you know what your building's fire alarm sound like? Learn the sound of the alarm.
- Post emergency numbers near all telephones.
- Ensure that nothing is blocking the fire safety systems.
- Report any sign of damage or malfunction of the fire safety systems to the building management.

DON'T PANIC

- Do not assume anyone else has already called 9-1-1.
- Call 9-1-1 immediately to report an emergency. The 9-1-1 dispatcher will ask questions regarding the emergency. Stay calm!

TOUCH YOUR DOOR

- Before attempting to exit your apartment or office, feel the door with the back of your hand. If the door feels warm to the touch, do not open it. Stay where you are!
- Stuff the cracks around the door with towels, rags, bedding or tape and cover vents to keep smoke out.
- If there is a phone in the room where you are trapped, call 9-1-1 to tell them exactly where you are located. Do this even if you can see fire apparatus on the street below.
- Wait at a window and signal for help with a flashlight, waving a sheet, and yell.

- If possible, open the window at the top and bottom, but do not break it, you may need to close the window if smoke rushes in.
- Be patient. Rescuing all the occupants of a high rise building can take several hours.
- If you feel the door and it is cool to the touch and you are going to attempt to open the door, brace your body against the door while staying low to the floor and slowly open it a crack. Check for the presence of smoke or fire in the hallway.
- If there is no smoke in the hallway or stair wells, follow your building's evacuation plan.

WHAT TO DO AFTER

- Once you are out of the building, STAY OUT! Don't go back inside for any reason.
- Notify fire personnel if you know of anyone trapped in the building.
- Only enter when fire personnel tells you it is safe to do so.

MAINTAIN AND INSTALL WORKING SMOKE ALARMS

No matter where you live, always install smoke alarms on every level of your home. Test them monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY TODAY!