

Surviving a Fire in Your Home

Take the time now to prepare - it can save lives!

An Ounce of Prevention...

Smoke Alarms

- Install a smoke alarm outside of each sleeping area and on each additional level of your **home**.
- Install smoke alarms **INSIDE** sleeping areas if people sleep with their doors closed.
- **Test smoke alarms once a month by pressing test buttons.**
- If an alarm fails the test or starts making beeping noises, replace batteries immediately.
- Replace **ALL** smoke alarm batteries at least **once a year**.

Fire Extinguishers

- **Consider purchasing one or more fire extinguishers to keep in your home.**
- Read the instructions to understand how your **fire extinguisher works, and make sure all family members understand how to use it.**
- Read the instructions to find out how to check **if your extinguisher is in working order, and** how frequently it needs to be checked.

Escape Ladders

- Consider installing escape ladders for upstairs **rooms**.
- **Learn how to use your escape ladder.**
- Store ladders close to windows.

Flashlights

- Keep flashlights throughout your house and **make sure everyone knows where they are** located.
- Check batteries regularly.

Planning Can Prevent Panic

Escape Routes

- Figure out at least two ways for escaping for **every room in your home**.
- Everyone living in your home should be **familiar with these escape routes**.

Practice

- **At least twice a year, practice using your escape plans.**

- **Practice crawling because you may need to escape** by crawling under smoke, where the freshest air will be.

Meeting Place

- **Decide on a location where everyone will meet outside your home after escaping from a fire.**
- **A meeting place is important so that you can** quickly see if everyone has escaped.

If a Fire Occurs...

Making Your Escape

- **If there is smoke or fire in one escape route, use another route.**
- **If there is no way to avoid smoke, remember to** stay low and crawl under the smoke, where the freshest air will be.
- If you want to escape by opening a closed door, **FIRST** check to see if the door feels warm before opening it. If it is warm do **NOT** open the door. Instead. Use another route.

Blocked Escape Routes

If all of your escape routes are blocked by smoke, heat or flames:

- Stay in the room and keep any doors closed.
- Keep out smoke by piling rugs, blankets or pillows along the bottom of any doors.
- If there is a phone in the room, call 911 and tell **them where you are**.
- Signal out a window for help using a brightly-colored cloth, sheet, towel, or flashlight.
- Stay as close to the floor as possible, near a **window or door**.

After Escaping

- Go to a neighbor's house and call 911 as soon as possible.
- **NEVER** go back inside a burning house. Once **you're outside, stay outside!**
- When firefighters arrive, tell them if you think **anyone is still inside**.

Tips to Avoid Falling

Taking a tumble is the most frequent accident to bother seniors. Reduce your chances of falling by making **home improvements and changing some habits.**

Look Around Your Home

Floors

- Keep the areas where you walk free from clutter, electrical and telephone cords, and other small objects that might be easily overlooked.
- **Secure loose rugs and mats with carpet tape or attach non-slip backing.**
- **For tile or wooden floors, avoid wax or use non-skid wax.**
- Stairs should have flat surfaces. Repair holes **or tears in carpeting and make sure it is well attached.**
- Eliminate raised thresholds if possible or make them highly visible.

Lighting

- Make sure it's easy to turn on a light **BEFORE entering every room in your home.**
- Keep night lights turned on in hallways, bedrooms and bathrooms.
- Make sure you can easily turn on a light while in bed, before getting up.
- **Place flashlights in convenient locations** throughout your home and check their batteries regularly.
- Light switches should be available at both the top and bottom of all stairs.
- Stairway lighting should be bright enough to clearly see all steps.

Bathrooms

- Tub and shower floors should have non-skid surfaces (strips or mats).
- Consider installing grab bars inside the bath or shower areas and next to the toilet.
- Consider installing a raised toilet seat.

Kitchen

- Frequently used items should be kept on lower shelves or other places that are easy to reach.
- You should have a sturdy step stool that is easy to use, preferably with a handrail. Do **NOT** stand on a chair to reach anything.

Stairs

- Sturdy handrails should be installed in all stairways and kept in good repair.

- Steps should have flat surfaces and be kept in **good repair.**
- All steps should have handrails, preferably on both sides of the steps.
- **For better traction, steps can be painted with a mixture of sand and paint.**
- During the winter, keep all entrances and **sidewalks clear of snow and ice.**
- All entrances should be well lit.
- Consider installing ramps (with handrails).

Reconsider Personal Habits

- When walking, stay alert to unexpected obstacles - **cords, furniture, pets, toys, etc.**
- **Avoid rushing to answer phones or the door.**
- Take time to make sure your balance is steady before sitting up or standing.
- Wear shoes that are supportive and snug fitting, with low heels and non-slippery soles.
- Don't walk around with only socks on your feet.
- If carrying packages, make sure your view isn't blocked and that you have a hand free for opening doors, holding onto railings, or steadying your balance.
- Keep alert for uneven, broken or slippery **pavement, sidewalks, and ramps.**
- **Don't rush to cross streets, especially if wet or icy.**
- **Consider using a cane or walker.**
- Find out if your medications might make you feel dizzy, drowsy or unsteady.
- If you live alone, keep in regular contact with friends, family or neighbors.

For Emergencies

- Keep emergency phone numbers posted where they can be easily seen. Consider whether they will be visible if you fall.
- **Make sure you can easily reach a phone when in bed.**

If You Fall

1. **Call 911** and other emergency contacts.
2. Stay warm by covering up with a blanket, coat, **towel, rug, or whatever you can reach.**
3. Consult a doctor even if you don't think you've been seriously hurt. Falling may indicate problems with medications or be a symptom of **illness or a condition that needs treatment.**

EMERGENCY PLANNING FOR THE HOME CARE CLIENT/PATIENT

This pamphlet has been provided by CPS to help you plan your actions in case there is a **natural disaster where you live.**

Maryland is prone to occasional natural disasters like tornadoes and floods. All areas of the U.S. are also subject to **man-made disasters such as power outages and terrorist attacks.**

Every client/patient receiving care or services in the home should think about what they would do in the event of an emergency.

Our goal is to help you plan so that we can try to provide you with the best, most consistent service possible during **the emergency.**

Know What to Expect

If you have recently moved to this area, take the time to find out what types of natural emergencies have occurred in the past, and what types might be expected.

Find out what, if any, time of year these emergencies are more prevalent.

Find out when you should evacuate, and when you shouldn't.

Your local Red Cross, local law enforcement agencies, local news and radio stations usually provide excellent information and tips for planning.

Know Where to Go

One of the most important pieces of information you should know is the location of the closest emergency shelter.

These shelters are opened to the public during voluntary and mandatory evacuation times. They are usually the safest places for you to go, other than a friend or relative's home in an unaffected area.

Know What to Take with You

If you are going to a shelter, there will be restrictions on what items you can bring with you. Not all shelters have **adequate storage facilities for medications that need refrigeration.**

We recommend that you call ahead and find out which shelter in your area will let you bring your medications and medical supplies. In addition, let them know if you will be using medical equipment that requires an electrical outlet.

During our planning for a natural emergency, we will contact you and deliver, if possible, at least (3) to (7) days of oxygen. Bring all your medication and supplies with you to the shelter.

How to Reach Us If There Are No Phones

How do you reach us during a natural emergency if the phone lines don't work? How would you contact us? If there is a warning of the emergency, we will make every attempt to contact you and provide you with the number of our cellular phone(s). (Cellular phones frequently work even when the regular land line phones do not.)

If you have no way to call our cellular phone, you can try to reach us by having someone you know call us from his/her cellular phone. (Many times, cellular phone companies set up communication centers during natural disasters. **If one is set up in your area you can ask them to contact us.**)

If the emergency was unforeseen, we will try to locate you by visiting your home, or by contacting your home nursing agency. If travel is restricted due to damage from the emergency, we will try to contact you **through local law enforcement agencies.**

Prevention...

We would much rather prepare you for an emergency ahead of time than wait until it has happened and then send you the supplies you need.

To do this, we need you to give us as much information as possible before the emergency. We may ask you for the name and phone number of close family members, or a close friend or neighbor. We may ask you where you will go if an emergency occurs. Will you go to a shelter, a relative's home? If your doctor has instructed you to go to a hospital, which one?

Having the address of your evacuation site, if it is in another city, may allow us to service your therapy needs through another company.

Helpful Tips

Get a cooler and ice or: freezer gel-packs to transport your medication.

Get all of your medication information and teaching modules together and take them with you if you **evacuate.**

Pack one week's worth of supplies in a plastic-lined box or waterproof tote bag or tote box. Make sure the seal is watertight.

Make sure to put antibacterial soap and paper towels into your supply kit.

If possible, get waterless hand disinfectant. It comes in very handy if you don't have running water.

If you are going to a friend's or relative's home during evacuation, leave their phone number and address with CPS and your home nursing agency.

When you return to your home, contact your home nursing agency and CPS so we can visit and see what supplies you need.

For More Information

There is much more to know about planning for and surviving during a natural emergency or disaster. To be ready for an emergency, contact your local American Red Cross or Emergency Management Services agency.

An Important Reminder!

During any emergency situation, if you are unable to contact our company and you are in need of your prescribed medication, equipment or supplies you must go to the nearest emergency room or other treatment facility for treatment.

