HOME
FIRE SAFETY

CHESTERMERE
PROUD
PROFESSIONAL
PROFICIENT
FIRE SERVICES

Reference Guide

CONTENTS

Smoke Alarms 101 2

Home Fire Escape Planning 5

Fire Extinguishers 7

Carbon Monoxide 9

SMOKE ALARMS 101

Did you know?

Having a smoke alarm cuts your risk of dying in a fire by almost half.

The largest percentage of fire deaths in the home occur at night while people are sleeping. Working smoke alarms can provide an early warning and the much-needed time to escape. Smoke alarms are just one part of an overall home fire safety plan that should also include fire-safe behaviors and creating and practicing a home fire escape plan.

To ensure your alarm will be ready in an emergency:

Battery powered alarms: Change the batteries every six months if your alarm runs on batteries only. A good way to remember this is to change them with daylight savings time changes in the spring and fall. When you change your clocks, change your batteries too. Also if your alarm "chirps," the batteries need to be changed.

Hard wired alarms: If your alarm is hard wired with batteries for back-up, change those batteries annually. Also if your alarm "chirps," the batteries need to be changed.

- Test all alarms in your home monthly.
- Clean alarms with a vacuum cleaner annually using the soft brush attachment as per the detector manufacturer's directions.
- Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.
- Install a working smoke alarm on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas.

There are two ways alarms sense danger:

1. Ionization detectors best detect smoke from flaming fires.
2. Photoelectric detectors best detect smoke from smoldering fires.

There are some detectors on the market with both technologies in them.

As it is recommended to sleep with bedroom doors closed, it is beneficial to have interconnected smoke alarms. This means that when one smoke alarm in the house is triggered, all smoke alarms sound.

For those hard of hearing, there are alarms with flash or strobe lights.

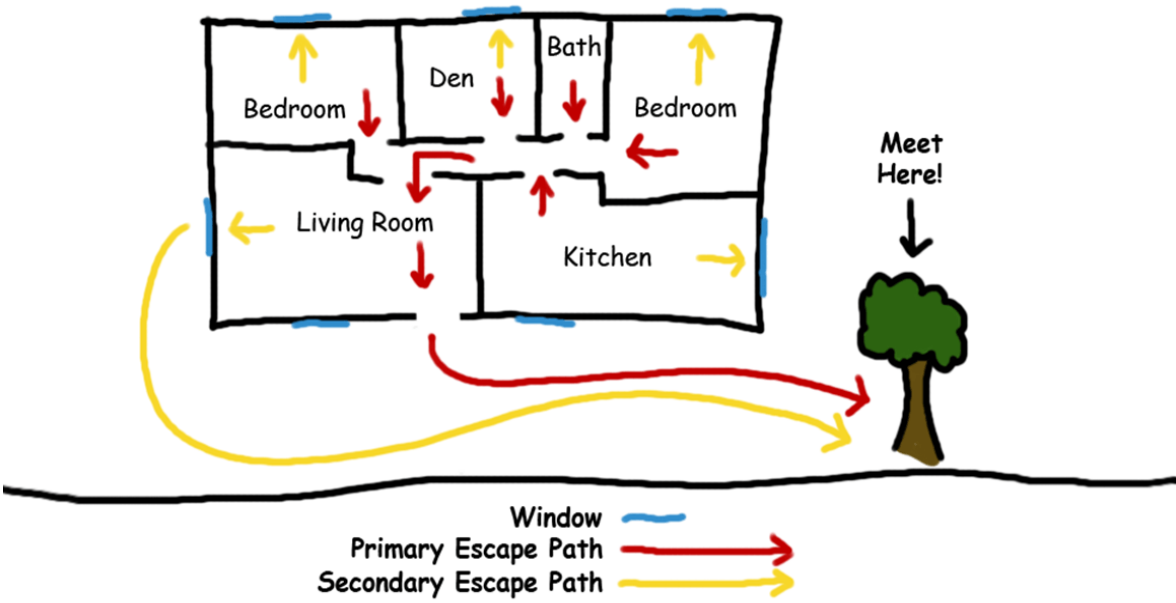
HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLANNING

Every Second Counts

During a fire there is no time to stop and think about an escape route – every second is important!

Having a home fire escape plan is one of the most important things you can do to protect yourself and your loved ones from fire.

- **Plan your escape routes.** Draw a floor plan of your home and plan your escape routes (at least two from each room). Remember to include your pets in your escape plan.
- **Practice your plan.** Ensure everyone knows how to open window locks and can operate ladders or security bars on windows.
- **Choose a family meeting place.** Choose a place a safe distance away from the house.
- **Hold a home fire drill.** Practice using your various exits.



What to do if there is a fire:

Get out quickly and safely. When the smoke alarm sounds, immediately start your escape. Do not try to gather possessions or pets. Never go back in to your home for any reason once you leave.

Check the door. Stay low behind the door, use the back of your hand to feel the door and door handle for heat.

If the door feels cool GET LOW and GO! Open it slowly, if it is safe to leave the building, go to your meeting place. If you encounter smoke, stay low near the floor. Crawl on your hands and knees to your exit. Once you are out of the building stay out. Phone 9-1-1 from a neighbour's house.

If the door feels warm. Or if you see smoke or flames on either side of the door, keep the door shut and use your second escape route.

If you are trapped. Seal the openings around the door and vents with bedding or towels. Call 9-1-1. If it safe to open a window and there is no smoke, open it signal and yell for help.

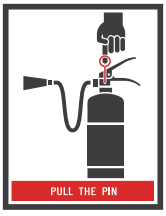
FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Do you have a working fire extinguisher?

Having a working fire extinguisher in your home is a good measure of home fire protection.

Portable fire extinguishers can provide a first line of defence against a small fire. They are not intended for use on an out-of-control fire, such as one that has reached the ceiling.

- Read the instructions that come with the fire extinguisher and become familiar with its parts and operation before a fire breaks out.
- Ensure the proper size and type – 5-10lbs ABC extinguishers are usually adequate for the home.
- Mount in areas with easy access and near exit points of a room.
- Check expiry dates and service when required.
- Ensure everyone knows how to use the extinguisher.



Using PASS to put out a fire

Pull the pin that unlocks the operating lever

Aim low at the base of the fire

Squeeze the lever

Sweep the nozzle or hose from side to side moving carefully closer to the flames

- **Keep your back towards a clear exit**
- **Once the fire is out, watch the fire area and repeat the process if the fire reignites**
- **Have the fire department inspect the fire site even if you're sure the fire is out**
- **If unable to extinguish the fire, leave the building and call 9-1-1**

CARBON MONOXIDE (CO)

Carbon monoxide

An odorless, colorless toxic gas.

In an enclosed space such as a home or garage, even a small amount can cause serious illness or death. Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a gas you can't see, smell or taste. Known as the silent killer, CO is the number one cause of accidental poisoning deaths in North America.

Most common symptoms of CO poisoning:

- Weakness
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Chest pain

Prevent and detect

- Any fuel burning appliance in your home is a potential source of carbon monoxide.
  Ensure that these appliances are properly installed, maintained and serviced annually.
- Ensure all indoor and outdoor vents and chimneys are clear of debris and snow or ice.
- Check the flame of all natural gas appliances (it should be blue).
- Fuel burning appliances require an adequate air supply. Ensure the area around these appliances is unobstructed.
- Never idle vehicles in the garage.

CO detectors will help detect the presence of carbon monoxide

- Have all CO detectors installed and maintained according to manufacture's specifications.
- Have one on every floor of the house and next to sleeping areas.
- Be aware of the expiry date and replace based on manufacturer's recommendations.
- If applicable, replace the battery annually.
- Vacuum monthly.

CONTACT US

Chestermere Fire Services

(403) 272-9878
thecityofchestermere.ca/cityservices/fire-services

For emergencies dial 9-1-1

- Check your smoke alarms regularly
- Have a plan
- Have a meeting place
- Get out and stay out!

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