



SHREVEPORT FIRE

D E P A R T M E N T

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How to Survive the Fire

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Fire Prevention Officer

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) statistics, US fire departments responded to 494,000 structure fires in 2014. Home fires resulted in 2,745 deaths and 11,825 injuries. Every 85 seconds a home structure fire was reported resulting in almost 7 billion dollars in property loss.

Despite all of our technological advances in the fire service industry, we have not been able to eliminate the hazards of fire. I've heard it said that the top three causes of all fires are men, women, and children. We all know that if humans are involved there is room for error. That being said, we should take steps to marginalize our mistakes.

Successful endeavors are usually preceded by an effective plan. At an early age, we are taught the importance of planning and how it can lead to a positive outcome. Benjamin Franklin is quoted as saying "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail". This adage also applies to a Fire Escape Plan. So ask yourself, "Do I have a fire escape plan for myself and my family"? If the answer is "no", then are you planning to fail yourself or your family in the event of a tragic fire. However, if the answer is "yes", do you actually practice your plan?

"You've got to have a plan and you've got to practice the plan"!

The **Shreveport Fire Department** recommends the following simple steps to help you get started on your own personalized home fire escape plan:

- Place **smoke alarms** outside sleeping areas (follow manufactured guidelines for proper placement)
- Be familiar with the sound of an alarm and treat each incident as an actual emergency
- Always have at least **two ways out** (Make sure windows and doors are functioning properly and if necessary keys are close. Plan your escape from windows that are high from the ground)
- Teach children not to hide, but "go outside"
- Get low to the floor when making your escape (cleaner and cooler air is lower to the floor)
- Never go back into a burning house (**Get Out and Stay Out!**)
- Agree on and go to a "**Safe Meeting Place**" where everyone should assemble
- Have someone call **911**

Once you've established your plan, practice it from time to time to create some muscle memory. Fire incidents can cause anxiety and loss of concentration, but it's a time to act decisively, and without hesitation.

Make a Home Fire Escape plan for your home and plan to survive the fire!

Fred Sanders, Assistant to the Fire Chief
Shreveport Fire Department