

# PERSONAL FIRE SAFETY TIPS

**There are steps you can take to improve your odds of surviving sudden disaster. Everyone should have a personal emergency evacuation plan when visiting an unfamiliar building, staying at a hotel or attending a performance or special event. For the most part, the advice offered here hinges on heightened observation of your surroundings and a bit of advance preparation.**

## BEFORE YOU ENTER

Trust your instincts. Take a good look around! Does the building appear to be in a condition that makes you feel comfortable? Is the entrance wide with doors that open outward for easy exit? Is the outside clear of materials stored against the building or blocking exits? Does the staff appear attentive and responsive?

Have a communication plan. Identify beforehand, and be sure everyone traveling with you knows, an emergency contact person (relative or friend) to call in case you become separated during an emergency.

Plan a meeting place. Agree upon a meeting place outside of and a safe distance from the building to meet family or friends who may be accompanying you. If there is an emergency, be sure to all meet there. Immediately notify emergency personnel of any missing person.

## WHEN YOU ENTER

Locate exits immediately. When you enter a building, look for all available exits. Are the exits clearly marked and well lit? Some exits may be in front and some in back of you. Always be prepared to use the exit closest to you as you may not be able to use the main exit. Become familiar with your surroundings and plan your escape. When an area becomes dimly lit or fills with smoke you will not be able to see the exit signs.

Check for clear escape routes. Make sure aisles and hallways are not obstructed by chairs or furniture. Check to make sure your planned exit door is not blocked or chained closed. If there are not at least two clearly marked exits or escape routes are blocked, report the violation to management and leave the building if it is not addressed immediately. Call the fire department and register a complaint.

Do you feel safe? Does the building appear to be overcrowded? Maximum occupancy limit should be posted near the front door. If you cannot move comfortably now, it will be even more difficult or impossible in an emergency. Are there fire sources that may make you feel unsafe such as candles, pyrotechnics, people smoking carelessly or other heat sources? Are there safety systems in place such as exit lights, smoke alarms and fire sprinklers? Ask the management for clarification if you are concerned. If you don't feel safe, leave the building immediately. Again, always trust your instincts!

## DURING AN EMERGENCY

React immediately. If an alarm sounds, you see smoke, fire or other unusual situation, do not wait to see what others may do - exit the building immediately but calmly. Use your closest exit - keep in mind that your closest exit may not be the main exit.

Don't panic. Easy to say, but crucial to your survival. Remaining calm can significantly increase your chance of survival. Having a plan gives you the advantage at the time of an emergency - everyone should preplan their emergency evacuation.

Get out, stay out. Once you have escaped, stay out. Do not go back into the building until authorities say it is safe to do so. Let firefighters and emergency personnel do their jobs.



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