

High Rise Fire Safety

The key to fire safety for those who live and work in these special structures is to practice specific high-rise fire safety and prevention behaviors. There are simple fire safety steps you can take to prevent the loss of life and property in high-rise fires.

Be Prepared for a High-rise Fire Emergency

- *Never lock fire exits or doorways, halls or stairways. Fire doors provide a way out during the fire and slow the spread of fire and smoke. Never prop stairway or other fire doors open.*
- *Learn your building evacuation plan. Make sure everyone knows what to do if the fire alarm sounds. Plan and practice your escape plan together.*
- *Be sure your building manager posts evacuation plans in high traffic areas, such as lobbies.*
- *Learn the sound of your building's fire alarm and post emergency numbers near all telephones.*
- *Know who is responsible for maintaining the fire safety systems. Make sure nothing blocks these devices and promptly report any sign of damage or malfunction to the building management.*

Do Not Panic in the Event of a High-rise Fire Emergency

- *Do not assume anyone else has already called the fire department.*
- *Immediately call your local emergency number. Early notification of the fire department is important. The dispatcher will ask questions regarding the emergency. Stay calm and give the dispatcher the information they request.*

If the Door Is Warm to the Touch

Before you try to leave your apartment or office, feel the door with the back of your hand. If the door feels warm to the touch, do not attempt to open it. Stay in your apartment or office.

- *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 the fire department again 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 or by waving a sheet.*
- *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 the Door Is Not Warm to the Touch

- *If you do attempt to open the door, brace your body against the door while staying low to the floor and slowly open it a crack. What you are doing is checking for the presence of smoke or fire in the hallway.*
- *If there is no smoke in the hallway or stairwells follow your building's evacuation plan.*
- *If you don't hear the building's fire alarm, pull the nearest fire alarm "pull station" while exiting the floor.*
- *If you encounter smoke or flames on your way out, immediately return to your apartment or office.*

After a High-rise Fire Emergency

- *Once you are out of the building, STAY OUT! Do not go back inside for any reason.*
- *Tell the fire department if you know of anyone trapped in the building.*
- *Only enter when the fire department 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.

Fire Alarm Systems

Fire alarm systems appear at first as very complex and tend to scare most away from their operations; Alarm systems are designed to be your 24 hour fire watchman, and these systems do need to be checked regularly in order to maintain their effectiveness; Annual servicing is required as well as periodic maintenance from time to time.

NFPA 1, the Life Safety Code recommends that building occupants perform at least two fire drills/ tests per year in order for occupants to become familiar with the systems operation, sounds and their actions in the event of an alarm.

Most Alarm systems in Hi-Rises are similar in operation:

If you see smoke or fire in your occupancy or the building, and the alarm has not sounded yet; Find the nearest "fire alarm pull station" and activate it. Find the nearest exit out of the building and exit safely. Do not go back inside. Since you are the one who noticed the smoke or fire, try to explain to the first arriving firefighters where and what you saw.

If you are inside your occupancy and "YOUR" smoke alarm activates, something in your unit is possible on fire..... exit yourself and anyone else in your unit, *find the nearest "fire alarm pull station" and activate it. Find the

nearest exit and exit the building safely. Do not go back inside. Since you are the one who noticed the smoke or fire, try to explain to the first arriving firefighters where and what you saw.

Finally if you hear the alarm signal sounding in the building or your occupancy, notify others inside your unit the need to leave *(you may be directed to stay within your unit to stay safe without the need to evacuate down and out *depending on the location and severity of the fire) *Always heed orders from firefighters, their job is to protect you; Check outside your doorway for safe evacuation; Exit the building safely, (assisting others needing help down the stairwell). Do not go back inside.

Source: NFPA

