

# Move-in Safety Tips and Checklist for Apartment Residents



- **Create a home escape plan** - Fire drills are important for all homes, including apartment buildings. You need to know the basics of escape planning:
  - ✓ Identify two ways out of your home
  - ✓ Have a clear path to your exits (Be sure to remove any tripping hazards from your floor)
  - ✓ In the event of a fire, get low and go under smoke to your exit
  - ✓ Have a designated meeting place outside your home
  - ✓ Know how you would respond in an emergency by practicing your escape plan
  - ✓ Be aware that sometimes the safest thing you can do in a tall building fire is to stay put and wait for the firefighters
- **Know the plan for your building**

Make sure that you're familiar with your building's evacuation plan, which should illustrate what residents are supposed to do in the event of an emergency. The evacuation plan should be posted in places where all residents can see and review it. The building management may hold a fire drill with occupants. Be sure to participate when your building drills take place. When looking for an apartment or high-rise home, look for one with an automatic sprinkler system. Sprinklers can extinguish a home fire in less time that it takes for the fire department to arrive.
- **Practice is key**

Whether your building has one floor or 50, it's essential that you and your family are prepared to respond to a fire alarm. Identify all of the exits in your building and if you are using an escape planning grid, mark them on your escape plan. Make sure to mark the various stairways too, in case one is blocked by fire.
- **Never use the elevator**

In case of fire, always use the stairs to get out, never the elevator. Make sure to practice using the stairs as part of your escape plan. If someone in your family has difficulty climbing down steps, make sure to incorporate a contingency for this into your plan.
- **Stay low**

Smoke from a fire is toxic and deadly no matter what kind of structure you live in. When you hold your fire drill, everyone in the family should practice getting low and going under the smoke to the exit. In the event of a fire, if both stairwells are filled with smoke, stay in your apartment and wait for the firefighters.
- **Seal yourself in for safety**

If you can't exit an apartment building due to smoke or fire in the hallway, call the fire department to report your exact location and gather in a room with a window to await their arrival. Close all doors between you and the fire. Use duct tape or towels to create a seal around the door and over air vents in order to keep smoke from coming in.
- **Stay by the window**

If possible, you should open your windows at the top and the bottom so fresh air can get in. Don't break the window - if smoke enters the room from outside the building, you won't be able to protect yourself.
- **Signal to firefighters**

Wave a flashlight or light colored cloth at the window to let the fire department know where you are located.

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**Prevention and planning is the key to protecting your family and neighbors.**

Use this checklist as a guide to identify and correct possible fire safety problems in your apartment. If you check “NO” to any of these questions, be sure to correct the hazard to reduce your risk and increase your preparedness for fire.

**YES NO**

- Do you have working smoke alarms?
- Do you have working carbon monoxide alarms?
- Are all electrical cords in good condition? (not frayed or cracked)
- Is your apartment free from the storage of flammable liquids?
- Are space heaters at least 3 feet away from combustibles?
- Are electrical items plugged into wall sockets (not into extension cords?)
- Is your apartment door fireproof and self-closing?
- Are your windows clear and unobstructed?
- Can all windows be opened easily from inside?
- Is your floor free of tripping hazards? (clutter, cords, rugs, spilled liquids)
- Would firefighters be able to walk through your home without tripping?
- Is there enough room on your floor to move a wheeled pram or gurney?
- Do you have operable flashlights handy?
- Do you use battery operated candles instead of flaming candles?
- Do you always attend to the food you are cooking?
- Do you keep a lid near the stove when you are cooking?
- Do you use potholders and oven mitts to handle hot cookware? (not towels)
- Do you cook on low temperatures & check your food often when heating?
- Do you have a home fire escape plan?
- Have you registered for emergency alerts at ***WestMetroFire.org***?
- Have you completed a family safety profile at ***smart911.com***?
- Have you completed ***File of Life*** for each person in your home?

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**WestMetroFire.org**