



Disaster Facts - Fires

From 1900-1990 more Americans died in fires than were killed in all of the wars during that same period. Each year, **fire kills more Americans than all natural disasters combined**. Residential fires are the leading cause of accidental death for children under the age of five. (Source: "Are You Ready", FEMA publication).

Fire spreads quickly; you may not have time to grab valuables or make a phone call. In two minutes a room can become life threatening. In five minutes your house can be engulfed in flames.

A fire's heat and smoke are more dangerous than the flames. Inhaling the super-hot air can sear and scorch your lungs.

Fire produces poisonous gases that can cause you to be disoriented and drowsy. Instead of being awakened by a fire, you may fall into a deeper sleep.

Most injuries due to fire come from smoke inhalation rather than burns.

Working smoke detectors double your chance of surviving a fire. Experts advise that you clean smoke detectors regularly and replace batteries once a year.

Plan two escape routes from every room in the house. Visibility is severely limited during a fire. Practice escaping from rooms with your eyes closed or blindfolded, since during a fire, the house will be filled with thick, black smoke. Pick a place outside your home for the family to meet after escape.

Windows should be easily opened, not nailed or painted shut. If you have security bars on windows, have a fire safety opening feature so they can be easily opened from inside.