

## 17. Escape planning for people with disabilities

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When making an escape plan, focus on the abilities you and any caregivers have to escape a fire.

- What can you do to ensure that you will get out or be protected if there is a fire?
- If you require any special assistance or devices, identify these as part of your plan and pre-arrange them. This could be assistance from your caregiver, a neighbour, a roommate or a family member.

In making your plan, its important to consider these four elements:

- Notification. How will I learn of what and where the emergency (fire) is? This could come from a smoke or CO alarm, another occupant or a passerby.
- Route. What are the safest escape paths out of the home? Do I have two or more options?
- Escape. Can I escape by myself or do I need assistance? If I require assistance what kind and type assistance do I need?
- Timeliness. If I need assistance will that assistance allow me to escape my dwelling within 3 minutes? If not do I need to re-evaluate my plan and/or the life safety provisions of the dwelling? Should I be living in a dwelling that has built in fire protection?

Remember: when it comes to understanding your needs, you are the expert. Be sure to communicate any special assistance you might require to caregivers, firefighters or other first responders at the time you make your plan. Discussing your potential emergency needs with the Fire Department in advance can ensure everyone knows what to do when an emergency arises.

Have an escape plan and make sure that everyone knows their role in the escape plan. While it is recommended to have two ways out, sometimes that is not possible or practical due to the building type and design and/or the resident's abilities.

If you are unable to escape through a secondary route, your plan needs to include what you or your caregiver can do to protect yourself in your dwelling. The plan should include:

- Where to go (bedroom, bathroom or a balcony?),
- How to seal the room from smoke, and
- How to call for help to let the first responders know where you are and that that you are safe and that you require assistance.

If special equipment is required by the Fire Department or others to help with your escape, ensure it is noted in the plan and then communicated to the responders at the time of the emergency to ensure it is collected and brought to your dwelling.

Practise the plan to make sure everyone who has a role knows what is expected of them. In instances where a caregiver is present, all different care givers should practise the plan to ensure they, and you, are familiar with the plan and what is expected.