

4. How to draw an escape plan

Plan your escape

Be prepared. Once the smoke alarm sounds, you may only have a few minutes to get out safely. Everyone needs to know what to do and where to go if there is a fire.

No matter how prepared you are, home fires can occur. While a home fire will be a frightening experience, having a plan in place will assist and practicing you and your family getting out safely by preparing and practicing a home escape plan.

What should be in my home escape plan?

An effective home escape plan will be a map of your home that shows all the doors and windows. You should be able to identify two ways out of each room. You should have a map for every floor of your home with bedrooms.

Identify and plan the route to your outside meeting place (mailbox, tree, light pole or something else easily identifiable to all household members both in daytime and at night). The meeting place should be a safe distance (at least 10 metres) away from your home.

Practise your plan

Having a plan is only the first step. Everyone in your home should practise the home escape plan at least twice a year. As you practise, close the doors behind you as you leave. In a real emergency, this may slow the spread of smoke, heat and fire.

- Know the two ways out of every room, make sure all doors and windows open easily and, if one is necessary to evacuate, ensure that an escape ladder is near the window, unboxed and ready to use.
- Teach your children how to escape on their own. You may not be able to help them or you may have a temporary caregiver in the home. Teach your babysitter the plan.
- Don't just practise your evacuation in the daylight. Things look different in the dark, so practise your plan at night too.

REMEMBER: If the smoke alarm sounds, GET OUT AND STAY OUT.