



FIRE SAFETY



Fire can occur anytime, day or night. In the daytime they may appear to be deceptively small and easily controllable. At night, fire becomes worse than a nightmare.

Fires remain small and grow slowly for only a short time. After that, a fire can become a rolling inferno, moving through a home in moments. During the first five minutes, a small fire can preheat the ceiling materials of a room to over a thousand degrees. At this temperature, materials commonly found in a home begin to break down and release vapors. Some vapors coming from these materials at this point in the fire are as flammable as gasoline vapors. When the room becomes rich enough with vapors, the fire will move across the room in one rapid sweep. It only takes a couple of seconds under these conditions for the fire to change from the small incipient stage to a fully involved room. This is called "flashover". In a 10 by 10 foot room, it may happen in as little as two minutes. People can become trapped because they don't realize how fast the situation can change.

Once a fire flashes over in a room, it will begin to spread rapidly throughout the building. The number and location of open doors will directly affect the speed and direction the fire will take. Heated gases created by the fire will be forced from the room rapidly because they are expanding. In fire tests these gases have been seen to carry the fire down the hall at a rate of a hundred feet in ten seconds. This deadly speed is only possible when doors are nonexistent or are open. Closing any door in the path of the fire slows its spread for a time. How much time depends on the material, and the construction of the door. Ordinary room doors will confine a fire for three to five minutes. Sometimes that confinement can last longer.

Upon Discovery of a Fire

- GET OUT! Fire Safety in the home means, with few exceptions, complete evacuation of the home.
- Close the doors. **Do not fight the fire unless it is to save a life.** By closing the door, you confine the fire and slow it from spreading. With the door closed the fire may be confined to a single room. If possible, close the doors to other rooms on your way out to give added protection.
- Once you are outside, **Dial 9-1-1** from a neighbor's phone or your cell phone. Be prepared to provide the
 - Address
 - Nearest cross street, and
 - Call back phone number. (The phone you are calling from).
 - Don't hang up before the dispatcher tells you they have all of your information
 - Be prepared to tell the dispatcher who you are, where you are, and what the problem is.

Report All Fires and Smoke

Many times people are hesitant to call the Fire Department for small fires. Some people feel themselves capable of handling the situation. Others are embarrassed that they had a fire, and don't want anyone to know. Some fear being charged for the service that the Fire Department provides. Consider the risks. Even when you think you have put out the fire, they should be inspected by the Fire Department to insure that they have been completely extinguished.