

GWINNETT COUNTY
FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

RESIDENTIAL SAFETY GUIDE



HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST

KITCHEN AND COOKING SAFETY

Do you stay in the kitchen when food is cooking on the stove? Yes No

Are pot handles inward so they can't be bumped or overturned? Yes No

Do you make sure kitchen towels, potholders, and other things that can burn are kept away from the stove? Yes No

Is a fire extinguisher within reach? Yes No

HEATING SAFETY

Do you have your furnace and chimney professionally serviced each year? Yes No

Do you keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from things that could catch fire, such as furniture, curtains, and papers? Yes No

Does your fireplace have a sturdy screen to contain sparks? Yes No

SMOKE ALARMS

Are smoke alarms installed on each floor of your home, in hallways, inside bedrooms, and outside all sleeping areas? Yes No

Do you test your smoke alarms weekly to make sure they are working properly? Yes No

Do you change the batteries in your smoke alarms every 6 months? Yes No

Have you replaced smoke alarms that are at least 10 years old? Yes No

MORE FIRE SAFETY

Does your family practice a home fire escape plan regularly, both during the day and at night? Yes No

Do you douse cigarette and cigar butts with water before throwing them away? Yes No

Are you careful not to leave burning candles unattended? Yes No

Are you careful not to overload electrical outlets, extension cords, and power strips? Yes No

Do you check all wires and cords for damage and cover all unused electrical outlets? Yes No

Do you keep a fire extinguisher within easy reach on each floor of your residence? Yes No

If you answered "No" to any questions, your home may not be fire safe. For more information on fire and life safety prevention, visit GwinnettFireEducation.com.

Want to find your local Gwinnett County fire station?
Scan the QR code!

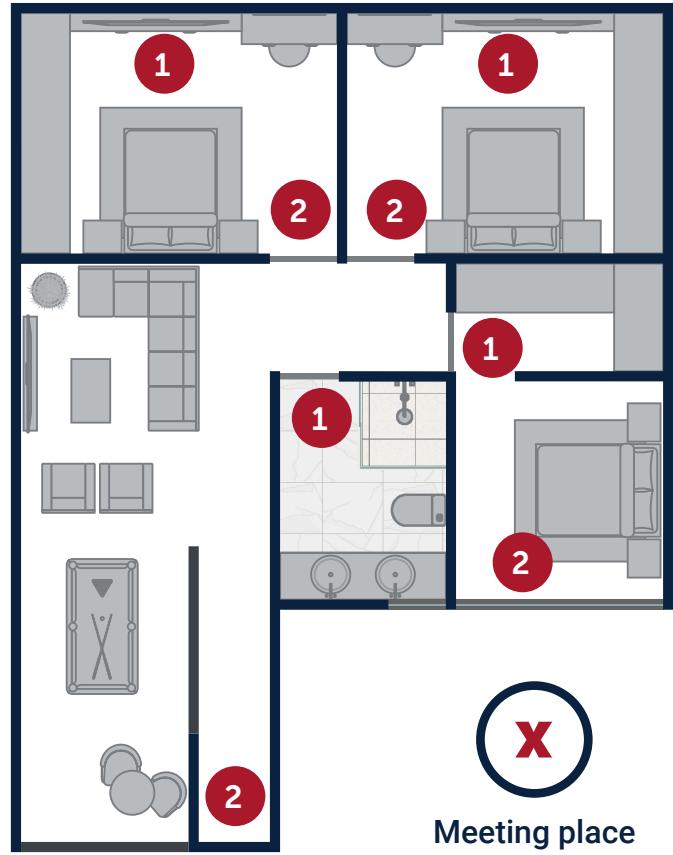
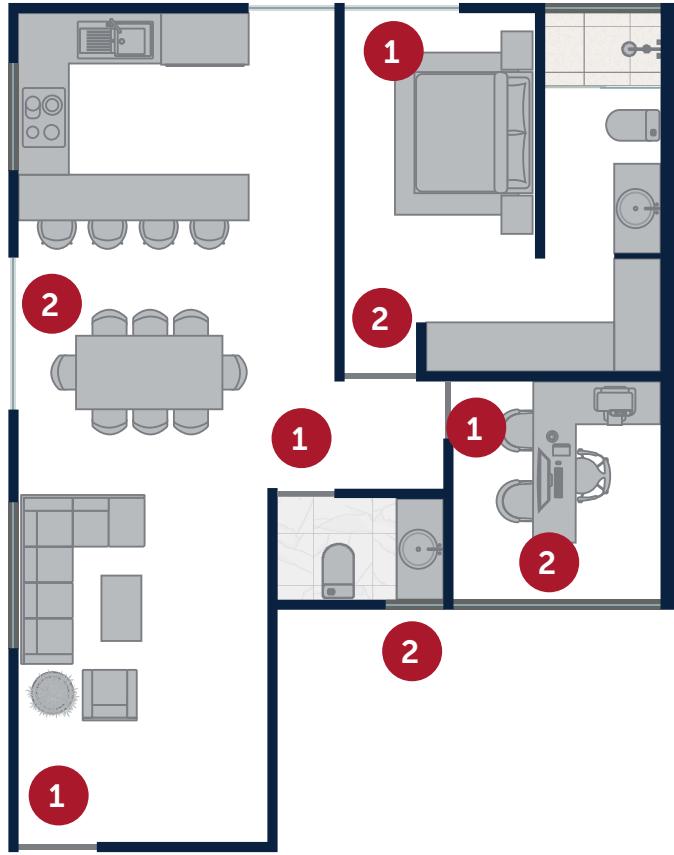


HOME FIRE SAFETY PLAN

HOW TO MAKE A HOME FIRE SAFETY PLAN

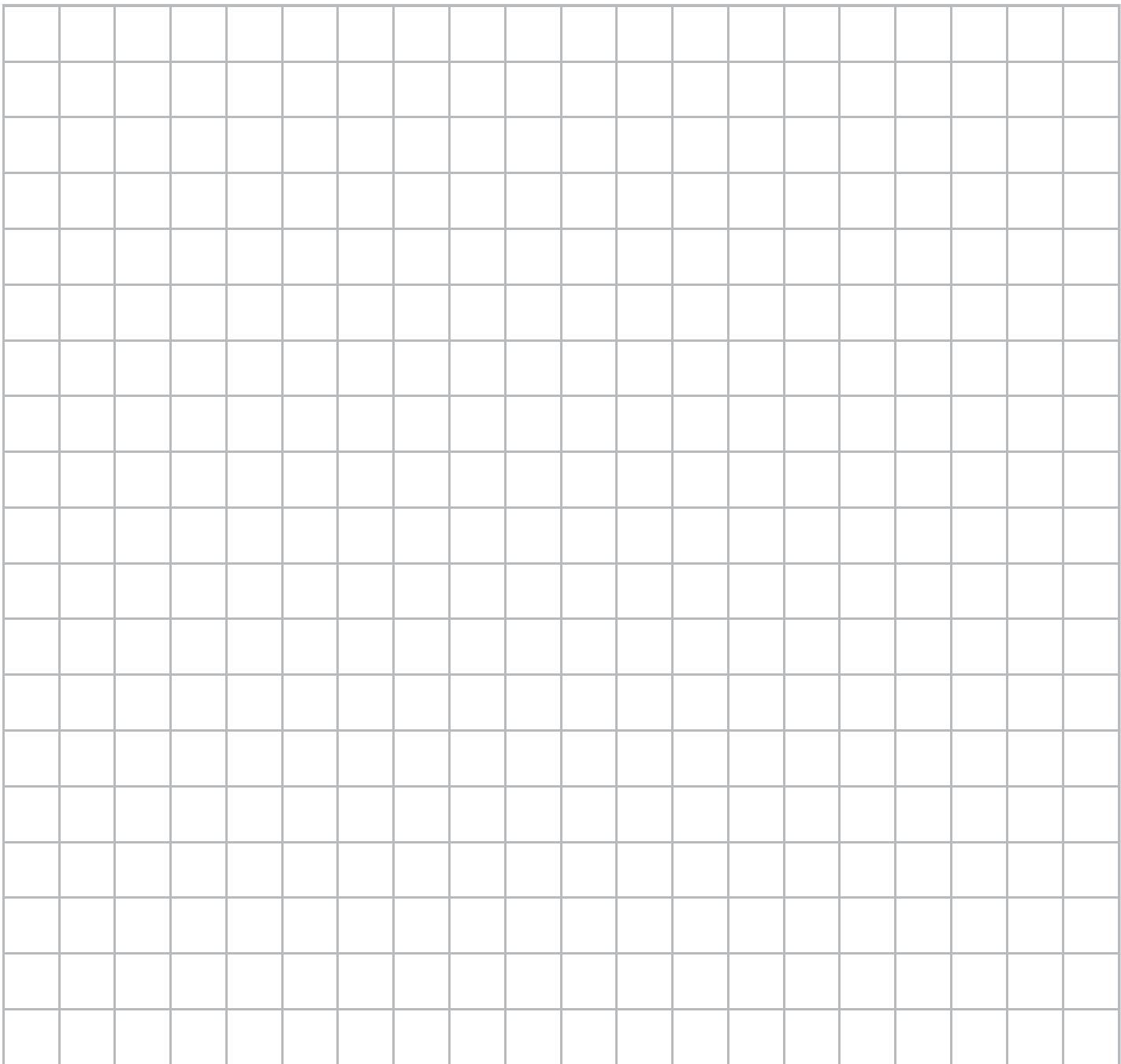
- Draw a map of your home. Show all doors and windows.
- Visit each room. Mark two ways out on your map.
- All windows and doors should open easily. You should be able to use them to get outside.
- Ensure your home has smoke alarms. Push the test button to ensure each alarm is working.
- Pick an outside meeting place, away from the house and the street, where everyone can meet.
- Make sure your home or building number can be seen from the street.
- Talk about your plan with everyone in your home.
- Ensure everyone in your home knows how to dial 911 or your local emergency number.
- Practice your home fire drill at least twice a year.
- Make your own home fire escape plan using the grid provided on the next page.

EXAMPLE:



CREATE YOUR HOME ESCAPE PLAN

A home fire escape plan can help you and your family get outside quickly and safely in case of a fire. Smoke from fire can make it hard for you to see, so it's important to be aware of all exits such as doors and windows.



Have one of our certified fire educators review your plan and ensure all your smoke alarms are installed and working correctly. If you don't have a smoke or carbon monoxide alarm, we will provide and install one for free!





SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

SMOKE ALARMS

Almost 60 percent of home fire deaths happen in properties with no smoke alarms or smoke alarms that fail to operate.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Replace your smoke alarm every 10 years.

Test your alarms at least once a month

Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home, one in the hallway outside of the bedrooms, and then one in each bedroom.

Sleep with your bedroom door closed.



Interconnected smoke alarms are the safest option.

Smoke alarms should be at least 10 feet from the stove.

If your smoke alarm starts to chirp, the batteries are low—replace them immediately.

If you have smoke alarms with 9-volt batteries, the batteries should be replaced twice a year.

CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

Carbon monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in America. Using carbon monoxide alarms could prevent many of these deaths.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What is it?



Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless and tasteless poison gas that is produced by fuel burning appliances like furnaces, ovens, clothes dryers, water heaters, space heaters, and fireplaces, among others.

What are the symptoms?

Initial symptoms are similar to the flu with no fever and can include dizziness, severe headaches, nausea, sleepiness, fatigue, weakness, and disorientation.

Carbon monoxide is often referred to as the silent killer because it is odorless, tasteless, and colorless. In fact, its symptoms are often misdiagnosed, and many people don't know they're suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning.

How can I protect my family?



Install a carbon monoxide alarm on each level of your home and one in the hallway leading to the bedrooms.

Test your carbon monoxide alarm once a month.

Replace your alarms every 10 years.

Have all fireplaces cleaned and inspected annually.

Don't block or seal the exhaust ducts used by water heaters, ranges, or clothes dryers.

Don't leave your car running in your garage or carport.

COOKING SAFETY TIPS

Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home injuries in the United States, according to the National Fire Protection Association. People are burned by hot cooking equipment such as ranges, ovens, pots, pans, or by scalds from hot drinks, soups, or food from the microwave. Here are our top tips for staying safe while cooking:

One of the top ways you can prevent a fire in the kitchen is to stay in the kitchen when you're cooking any kind of food.



If you leave the kitchen, even for a short time, turn off the stove.

Use a timer as a reminder that you have food in the oven or on the stove.

Keep anything that can catch fire like potholders, oven mitts, and curtains away from your stovetop.

Turn pot handles away from the stove's outside edge.

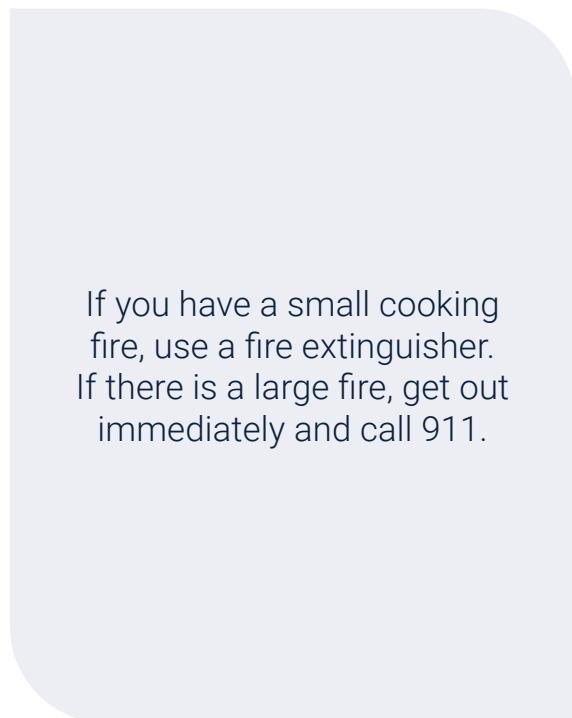


If you have a small oven fire, turn off the oven and keep the oven door closed. Have the oven serviced before you use it again.

Keep hot foods and liquids away from the edges of tables and counters.

Unplug small appliances when not in use.

If an appliance feels too hot, smokes, or gives off a strange odor, unplug it immediately and have it serviced or replaced.



If you have a small cooking fire, use a fire extinguisher. If there is a large fire, get out immediately and call 911.



If you doubt whether you can fight a fire with a fire extinguisher, don't. Get out and stay out.



Even if you put the fire out, still call 911 to have firefighters confirm that the fire is completely extinguished and didn't reach inside the wall, cabinets, etc.

If you need to use a fire extinguisher, don't panic. Remember the word **PASS**: **P**ull the pin. **A**im low, pointing the extinguisher nozzle at the base of the fire. **SS**weep from side to side at the base of the fire until it appears to be out.

Did you know that young children are at particularly high risk from non-fire cooking burns? Keep them safe by using tape to mark a kid-free zone on the floor at least 3 feet from around the stove.

Keep your fire extinguisher in an easily accessible area.

When buying a fire extinguisher, look for one labeled ABC, as you can use it on most fires.

After using the fire extinguisher to put out the flames, leave the room. Close the door to limit smoke and damage should the fire reignite.



GENERAL FIRE SAFETY TIPS

Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services provides free home safety surveys for all Gwinnett residents. The department's team of fire educators shares life-saving information with the community related to the causes of fires, injury and prevention, and ways to reduce and escape potential hazards in the home.

COMMON CAUSES OF HOUSE FIRES



CANDLES

Candles pose a risk for potential fires if they're not handled with care. It's important to make sure all candles are supervised by an adult, kept a safe distance from other flammable objects, and put completely out before leaving a room or going to sleep.

SPACE HEATERS

Space heaters and other portable heating devices are good ways to keep your home warm during the colder months. If not used properly, these devices can lead to an unintended fire in your home. If using a space heater, make sure to keep a 3-foot area around the space heater clear of any objects, plug a space heater directly into an outlet (don't use extension cords), and turn off any space heater when going to sleep or leaving the house.



ELECTRICAL

There is always a risk of an electrical fire while using appliances, extension cords, light fixtures, and space heaters. To prevent the risk of electrical fires, you should avoid overloading outlets. Turn off and unplug items that you do not use constantly. Check cords, electronics, and power outlets if you encounter burning or unusual smells coming from them.

SOME CAUSES OF ACCIDENTAL INJURY

TRIPS AND FALLS

Prevent injuries from trips and falls by evaluating items in and around your home. Consider habits such as good housekeeping, wearing sturdy comfortable shoes, and securing rugs and other floor coverings around the home to prevent these injuries.



BURNS

Burns can happen at any moment by any source of heat. Children and adults could potentially be injured by common items around the home. Keep in mind that burns can occur from hot water, accidents while cooking, and even the radiant heat from home heating devices and appliances such as space heaters, fireplaces, and wood stoves.



HOME SAFETY TIPS

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING A FIRE

Now that we've covered best practices with smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and safety tips to keep in mind when at home, let's look at specific things you need to know and consider during a fire. Whether you live in a single-family home or an apartment building, you need to be prepared in case of a fire.

Here are some things you should know and expect if a fire breaks out:

SMOKE IS DARK



Expect not to see in a fire. Smoke from a fire can fill a room or a hallway quickly. Smoke rises to the ceiling but does not go through the ceiling. It will spread out across the ceiling and begin settling back to the floor. This causes the room to be so dark with smoke that you would not be able to see your hand in front of your face. You may only see an orange glow in the distance that indicates where the fire is coming from.

FIRE IS HOT



The heat alone in a fire kills. Temperatures in a small room or corridor of the home can reach deadly heights in a matter of a seconds. Heat rises to the ceiling but like smoke, it cannot go through the ceiling. Heat spreads out across the ceiling and begins thermal layering back to the floor. The hottest air and gases will be at the ceiling and the coolest air will be down on the floor for the first few minutes.

SMOKE AND GAS KILL



Smoke and gas in a fire are considered the number one killer. There are several toxic gases given off in a fire, but only one toxic gas, carbon monoxide, is present no matter what material is burning. Breathing in carbon monoxide fumes will make you sick, put you to sleep, and ultimately kills. It is colorless, odorless, and tasteless. Plus, when you are asleep, you lose your sense of smell. The smell of the smoke will not wake you up, which is why you should always sleep with your doors closed.

TIME IS YOUR ENEMY



Time is your enemy during a fire. In a fire you may have only 2 minutes or less to escape before smoke, heat, or flames fill the home to the point where no one can survive.

FIRE SAFETY SURVIVAL TIPS

If a fire breaks out in your home, whether it's a house or an apartment, here are some tips to help you and your family make it out safely:

Stay calm and don't panic.

Stay low to the floor.

Crawl to the door and feel the door for heat with the back of your hand.

Is the door hot?

Keep the door closed. Pack the bottom of the door with a sheet or blanket to keep the smoke out.

Crawl to a window and open it without breaking the window if possible.

Close to the ground?

If you are close to the ground, you can use the window to escape.

Is the door cold or cool?

Slightly open the door and check if you see smoke or fire.

If you see fire.

If you see smoke.

Close the door and follow the steps for a hot door.

Stay at the bottom of the window and call 911 and tell them you are trapped. Give them your location inside the home and stay on the line with the emergency dispatcher.

Signal to the firefighters by hanging a bright colored piece of clothing or sheet out of the window.

If available, shine a flashlight out the window and yell to the firefighters when they arrive.

For bedrooms on the second floor, have a collapsible fire escape ladder ready to use for emergencies.

If you only see smoke, stay low and crawl out of the house. If you have to go down steps to get out, go feet first down the steps, and find the closest exit.





SCAN ME

Want to stay up to date on the most recent safety information and community events with Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services? Sign up for our email newsletter today!

Gwinnett County Fire and Emergency Services

678.518.4845
GwinnettFireEducation.com