

## MARCH WEEK 2

# APARTMENT AND MULTIFAMILY DWELLINGS



People living in an apartment, condominium, duplex or multifamily dwelling need to think ahead and be prepared in the event of a fire. It is important to know the fire safety features in your building and work together with neighbors to help keep the building as fire-safe as possible.

### General Tips

- For the best protection, select a fully sprinklered building. If your building is not sprinklered, ask the landlord or management to consider installing a sprinkler system.
- Meet with your landlord or building manager to learn about the fire safety features in your building (fire alarms, sprinklers, voice communication procedures, evacuation plans and how to respond to an alarm).
- Know the locations of all available exit stairs from your floor in case the nearest one is blocked by fire or smoke.
- Make sure all exit and stairwell doors are clearly marked, not locked or blocked by security bars and clear of all clutter. Report all hazards, such as piled trash, blocked exits, or missing exit lights, to your building manager.
- If there is a fire, pull the fire alarm on your way out to notify the fire department and your neighbors.
- If the fire alarm sounds, feel the door before opening and close all doors behind you as you leave. If it is hot, use another way out. If it is cool, leave by the nearest way out.
- If an announcement is made throughout the building, listen carefully and follow directions.
- Use the stairs to get out – never use the elevator unless you are directed to by the fire department.



### Fire Alarm System

- The fire alarm system has many parts that work together. Some of the parts are out of sight. In a fire, smoke detectors sense smoke and activate the fire alarm. Manual fire alarm boxes allow people to sound the alarm. When the fire alarm system activates it will warn residents of danger.
- Everyone in the building should know where to find the manual fire alarm boxes (alarm boxes on the wall with a pull bar). Most are found within five feet of an exit door.
- If there is a fire, pull the manual fire alarm box handle on your way out of the building.
- When the system senses smoke or fire, a loud horn or tone will sound. Everyone must know what this sound means and how to react.
- Leave the building right away if you hear the sound of a fire alarm. Stay outside at your meeting place until you are told the building is safe.

- Treat every fire alarm as an emergency. When the alarms sounds, get outside.
- Only use a manual fire alarm box if there is smoke or fire. Frequent false alarms are a problem. People might ignore the sound if they hear too many false alarms. False alarms also put firefighters at risk.

## **Escape 101**

- GO to your outside meeting place and stay there. Call the fire department. If someone is trapped in the building, notify the fire department.
- If you can't get out of your apartment because of fire, smoke or a disability,
- STUFF wet towels or sheets around the door and vents to keep smoke out.
- CALL the fire department and tell them where you are.
- OPEN a window slightly and wave a bright cloth to signal your location. Be prepared to close the window if it makes the smoke condition worse.
- Fire department evacuation of a high-rise building can take a long time. Communicate with the fire department to monitor evacuation status.

Information provided by NFPA <http://www.nfpa.org/public-education/by-topic/property-type-and-vehicles/apartments> and USFA <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/>

