

# ESCAPE FROM FIRE!

*Once You're Out,  
Stay Out!*

**O**ne of the greatest hazards to life that exists in a building fire of any magnitude is the lack of sufficient oxygen.

Oxygen not only is essential for human life, but also is key to supporting the life of the fire. When fire and humans compete for the limited amount of oxygen within a burning building, fire always wins!

Most fire fatalities are caused because of this. It is often referred to as death from smoke inhalation, but put in much simpler terms it is death by suffocation.

The dangers of oxygen displacement in a burning building as well as other hazards including the presence of toxic gases, the fire itself, the risk of explosion, building collapse, and electrocution make re-entering a burning structure a dangerous, if not deadly proposition.

**NEVER RE-ENTER A BURNING BUILDING!  
RESULTS COULD BE DEADLY!**



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# Escape From Fire! Once You're Out, Stay Out!

Go to a safe place (preferably prearranged) far enough away from the building in case of collapse or explosion and perform a head count of those who were in the building with you. If someone is missing, it is critically important that you tell arriving firefighters. Tell them who and how many people are missing and where they were last seen.

## IT IS IMPORTANT TO REALIZE

Once you have made your way out of a burning building you may already be suffering the effects from a lack of oxygen. Seek medical care if you or any others who escaped from the burning building are injured. Keep in mind that the symptoms of a lack of oxygen and/or exposure to toxic gases can closely resemble those of alcohol intoxication. Get any one who exhibits symptoms immediate medical attention. One of the major effects of a lack of oxygen is the impairment of judgment. The possible lack of oxygen on the way out of the burning building may impair one's ability to think clearly and rationally. Even if you are not personally affected, others who escaped with you may display an impairment of judgment.

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO PREVENT OTHERS FROM RE-ENTERING!**

Seek shelter from the elements in a safe neighboring building especially in the cold, rain, and extreme heat.

## NEVER RE-ENTER A BURNING BUILDING! RESULTS COULD BE DEADLY

Burning buildings contain many hazards, such as,

- Fire that can cause fatal or severe burn injuries.
- Intense heat that is hot enough to melt copper coins or aluminum pans.
- Flashover, where everything in a room becomes instantly engulfed in flames
- Low levels of oxygen causing difficulties in breathing or unconsciousness.
- Toxic gases such as carbon monoxide that can cause unconsciousness and death.
- Exploding gas mains, propane tanks and small arms ammunition that can cause severe injuries.
- Ceilings, walls, stairways and porches that can collapse preventing escape.
- Electrical lines that can become exposed and fall from outside connections to the ground outside the building and may result in electric shock or death.

## AFTER THE FIRE

If you cannot return to a building after the fire has been put out, make sure your property is secure. Ensure that the police are aware of the fact that the building will be unattended. Lock up or board up open windows and doors.

Ask firefighting officials or a neighbor to notify the insurance company, nearby relatives or the Red Cross to arrange lodging, if needed.



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For more information or copies of this publication, please contact:

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