

FIRE SAFE South Carolina



A COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION PROGRAM

FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY GUIDE

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#FireSafeSC

SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL | 141 MONTICELLO TRAIL

Fire and Life Safety Guide



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Emergency Preparedness

Natural and manmade disasters often occur with little to no warning. Preparing now for these emergencies can have a positive impact on the safety of you and your family. What do you need, what is your plan, and what is going on: these three “what’s” can help save your life!

#1 What do you need?

An emergency supply kit should include the following (not all inclusive):

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days
- Food, three-day supply of non-perishable food and a manual can opener
- First aid kit and a 7 day supply of any medications
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air
- Battery-powered (or hand crank radio) and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Cell phone with portable charger(s), inverter or solar charger
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- A multi-purpose tool and wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Paper local maps
- Copies of personal documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies) sealed in a waterproof plastic bag.
- Extra cash

#2 What is your plan?

- Know what kind of disasters are most likely to happen in your area, have and practice a plan with your family that address those types of disasters. Ask the following questions:
 - Are there any health and/or mobility issues?
 - What do you do if your family members become separated?
 - What are your safest routes for home and area escape?
 - Am I better off evacuating the area, sheltering in place, or going to an emergency shelter?

#3 What is going on?

- Keep up to date on current news and weather
- Have a weather alert radio programmed for your area and set your mobile devices to notify you of governmental emergency alerts.
- Communication can be a problem during an emergency. Have a family communication plan and consider having each family member call, text, or email someone outside your local area.

Apartment Safety

Right Alarm – Right Location

- Maintain your smoke alarms by testing monthly, changing batteries at least once a year, and replacing the smoke alarm every 10 years.
- Speak to your apartment manager if you see a damaged smoke alarm, fire extinguisher, or if an emergency light has burned out.

Fire Drill Plans and Prep

- Know where all the exit doors and stairwells are on your floor.
- Learn your building's evacuation plan if you have one available. Create and practice a Home Fire Drill Plan for your apartment.
- Count and remember the number of doors between your apartment and the nearest exit,

See a Problem, Take Action!

- Do not block or hang items from your fire sprinkler. Fire Sprinklers slow the spread of fire and smoke to give you more time to escape.
- Try to not prop open stairwell or exit doors. These are installed to slow the spread of heat and smoke if there is a fire.
- Follow manufacturer instructions regarding extension cords around carpet, hallways, and what size electrical load each outlet can handle.
- Don't grill on your balcony.
- **Heat your air, not your stuff!** Keep an open area of three feet around space heaters.

In the Event of a Fire

- Check every door before opening.
- If there's no smoke coming in around the door:
 - Open the door slowly. **Stay low**, and check for smoke or fire in the hallway
 - If the hallway is safe, follow your building's evacuation plan, and call 9-1-1 when you get outside.
 - Close doors behind you as you escape.
- If you see smoke coming in around a closed door **do not** attempt to open it. Try to find a different way out.
- If you're trapped:
 - Call 9-1-1, and tell the dispatcher your address, apartment number, and that you are trapped.
 - Cover vents and stuff cracks around the door with towels, rags, bedding, or tape.
 - Wait at a window and signal for help with a flashlight, waving a white cloth, or waving your arms.
- **NEVER** use an elevator to escape a fire, always use the stairs.
- Stay outside, and **NEVER** go back inside for any reason until firefighters tell you it is safe!
- If you think a person or pet is still inside, tell firefighters.

Hearing Impaired Safety

Because they may not be able to hear traditional smoke alarms, the deaf and hard-of-hearing are at special risk during a fire. To correct this issue, it is important to be aware of specialty smoke alarm technology that works with traditional smoke alarms. Having and practicing a home fire drill plan can also reduce the risk of becoming injured during a fire. With the right knowledge and tools, the deaf and hard-of-hearing may help save their own lives, as well as their loved ones, in the event of a fire.

Install and Maintain Traditional Smoke Alarms

- Follow manufacturer's instructions for smoke alarm installation.
- Be sure to have smoke alarms located inside and outside of each bedroom or sleeping area.
- Install, at least, one smoke alarm on each home level.
- Check the date on each smoke alarm as they should be replaced every 10 years - or sooner, if they do not respond properly when testing.
- Test smoke alarms monthly. Change the batteries, at least, once a year.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning to keep smoke alarms working well. The instructions are included in the package or found on the internet.

Install and Maintain Specialty Smoke Alarms

- Follow manufacturer's instructions for installation and care of specialty smoke alarms.
- Visual Smoke Alarm - a visual component, such as strobe lights alerts the resident when smoke is detected. Install a flashing smoke alarm on each level of the home.
- Install a "bed-shaker." Although it is not a smoke alarm, it works with smoke alarms in the home to notify hearing impaired individuals of a possible life-threatening fire emergency while they are in their bed.
 - South Carolina residents who are hearing impaired may qualify for a free "bed-shaker". To see if you qualify, visit:
<http://firesafe.sc.gov/hearingimpairedalarms.html>

Home Fire Drill Planning

- Draw the layout of your home, be sure to include each room with all doors and windows.
- Draw arrows on your "Fire Drill Planner" showing two ways out of every room.
- Draw a safe meeting place outside of the home. Pick an object that isn't easily moved such as a tree or mail box. Make sure it is a safe distance from the home.
- Practice your fire drill every six months, closing doors as you escape.
- Sleeping with your bedroom door closed may save your life.

For additional Information

- <http://firesafe.sc.gov/smokealarms.html>
- <http://firesafe.sc.gov/hearingimpairedalarms.html>
- <http://firesafe.sc.gov/docs/HomeFireDrillPlanner.pdf>

Pull to the Right

If you hear emergency sirens or see equipment with lights while driving you must slow down, remain calm, move to the right, and focus on the road and surrounding traffic. Drivers may encounter emergency vehicles, such as ambulances, fire trucks, and law enforcement vehicles, or work zones on the roadway. In this case, slow down and quickly move over. If you are unable to change lanes, slow down and keep your focus on the roadway and surrounding traffic.

Drive Safe, Be Safe

It is not uncommon to see emergency scenes or work zones on the side of the roads. Here are some tips to keep in mind when coming across an emergency scene or work zone.

- Keep vehicle under control.
- Proceed with due caution.
- Significantly reduce vehicle speed.
- Yield the right of way by making a lane change into a lane not next to the emergency equipment or work equipment if on a highway with at least four lanes, with at least two lanes proceeding in the same direction.
- If changing lanes is not possible or unsafe, maintain a safe speed for road conditions.
- Endangering temporary work zone or emergency personnel is considered a misdemeanor punishable by a fine. Obeying this law can save a life and prevent injury.

Move Over, SC!

- State law requires motorists to “move over” into an adjacent lane whenever possible when passing an emergency scene or temporary work zone.

Pull to the right for sirens and lights

Upon the approach of an emergency vehicle making use of an audible signal and visual signals the driver of every other vehicle traveling along a two-lane roadway shall:

- Yield the right of way by immediately drive to a position parallel to, and as close as possible, to the right hand edge or curb of the roadway clear of any intersection
- Stop and remain in that position until the emergency vehicle has passed, except when otherwise directed by a police officer.
- A driver of a vehicle traveling along a multi-lane roadway shall yield the right of way and remain in, or move to a location allowing the emergency vehicle or police vehicle to pass safely.
- Be aware of your surroundings on the roadways, keep your radio and other features at a low level to reduce distractions.