

# APARTMENT FIRE SAFETY

## A fact sheet on Fire Safety in Multi-Family Housing

Every 15 seconds a fire department responds to a fire somewhere in the United States. The major causes of home fire deaths are: Smoking materials, heating appliances, children playing with matches and lighters, arson, and cooking. By paying careful attention to these issues, each of us can share the responsibility of keeping our homes safe from fire.

### PROTECTION

*Smoke detectors* are required to protect the sleeping area in your home and increase your chance of surviving a fire by 50%. A *smoke detector* should be installed outside each sleeping area or bedroom. Test your detector monthly and replace the batteries twice each year.

### PREPARATION

Every unit should have a *fire escape plan*. Your plan must be practiced to be effective. Know at least two ways out of the building and choose an *outside meeting place* away from the building. Consider the following "*Special Hazards*" when planning your evacuation plan:

Often, there is only one way in or out---no back door.

If the stairwell is on fire, you may not be able to exit through your normal route.

Congested parking can mean blocked fire hydrants and/or blocked fire lanes which can slow down response time.

An apartment building is a very densely populated neighborhood. Fire can spread quickly to adjoining apartments. You rely on your neighbor to act in a safe manner and practice the same safety measures that you practice.

You may be above the ground level without a secondary escape ladder.

### WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF FIRE

Get out of the apartment. Use your fire escape plan. Go to the designated family meeting place.

Call 9-1-1 from a safe location.

Try to let neighbors know to get out. Help elderly folks or families who have many children.

If you can't get out, use a mobile phone to stay in touch with 9-1-1 dispatchers. Shine a flashlight or wave a sheet out the window to alert firefighters that you're trapped. Use towels to block openings around doors, stay low and put a wet cloth over your mouth and nose.

### TIPS FOR LIVING SAFELY:

Make sure you have smoke alarms that work.

Have a fire extinguisher and become familiar with its operation. Only use an extinguisher if the fire is small and you can place your back to the exit.

Don't park in front of fire hydrants and don't park in fire lanes.

Have a fire escape plan. Practice it.

Get acquainted with the elderly or disabled in your building community. If there's a fire, they may have extra difficulty getting out. You may be able to help them, or you can direct firefighters to the person's apartment.

A function of the *Neighborhood Building Blocks* program.  
"Building Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods Through Partnerships".

For More Information contact:  
Union Colony Fire/Rescue Authority  
Community Services Division  
970-350-9510  
WWW.UCFRA.ORG

