

HARTSDALE FIRE DEPARTMENT

APARTMENT AND CONDOMINIUM FIRE SAFETY TIPS

Responsibility for the fire safety of your building lies with each resident. That is why it is so important that you plan together to keep your building as fire safe as possible and learn the right thing to do should fire break out. The first place to start is to learn the facts.

- Cooking, Heating and Smoking is the top causes of fatal apartment fires. The leading human factor contributing to ignition is being asleep.
- Most residential fires occur at night when condos and apartments are most heavily populated.

Be Prepared! Plan for Everyone's Safety!

Meet with your landlord or building manager to devise fire safety plans for your building. As part of your group planning, explore your building. Know every possible exit, including exits from laundry, storage, and recreation rooms. If hallways become smoky in a fire, your memory can help you find a way out. Remember never to use elevators in a fire. Keep exit and stairwell doors always closed, but not locked. And keep your apartments and exits clear of debris and storage.

Focus on these four key elements in your fire safety plan:

- prevention
- detection
- escape planning and practice
- fire department notification

Prevention

An ounce of prevention can save your life. Prevention is your best insurance against fire. Take these simple fire safety precautions in your own unit to prevent fire from starting.

- Be careful with smoking materials. Keep large ashtrays for smokers and never smoke in bed!
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children. Store matches and lighters in a locked cabinet up high out of the reach of children.
- Check regularly for electrical hazards, such as worn electrical cords, overloaded extension cords and outlets, and broken appliances.
- Don't store flammable liquids in your home, car, or anywhere else inside your building.
- Don't use balconies, porches, fire escapes or furnace rooms for storage. Fires starting in these areas can burn undetected. NO gas or charcoal BBQ's.

Detection

Make sure the fire detection system works! If fire strikes, smoke detectors and fire alarms alert you to a fire right away, so you can get out of the building safely. Be sure your building has a working fire alarm system and learn to recognize the sound of the alarm. Know where the alarms are located in your building and how to operate them in an emergency.

Install smoke detectors on every floor of your own unit. Be sure to place detectors on the ceiling near bedroom areas. This way, if a fire starts while you are asleep, detectors will wake you before it's too late.

If you notice that smoke detectors in your own unit or in public hallways are beeping, be sure to have their batteries changed or electrical systems checked. Replace dead batteries immediately.

Escape Planning and Practice

In a fire, there is no time to stop and think. You need to know in advance the two quickest safe ways out of your unit and your building. That is why it is critical that you make and practice escape plans.

Draw up floor plans for each floor with exits clearly marked. Ask your building manager to post the floor plans in high-traffic areas, such as near elevators, exit doors, and foyers. Make a point to review the floor plans now - because in a fire, smoky conditions and urgency can make this impossible.

Once you've mapped out evacuation procedures, decide on a meeting place outdoors. Go there as soon as you exit the building and stay there. This way, you can keep track of who is out and who may be trapped inside. If you think someone is trapped, tell the fire department - do not go back into the building yourself.

PRACTICE! Rehearse your escape plans as a group. Appoint a floor captain and hold a fire drill to make sure that everyone knows the right thing to do when the alarm sounds.

Fire Department Notification

Call **9-1-1**

The Hartsdale Fire Department

914-949-2324 EMERGENCY

914-949-2325 BUSINESS

As a general rule, get out of the building, and then call the fire department from a safe place. When you call, be ready to provide your location and any other information about the emergency.

What to Do If Fire Strikes

- Don't rush out of your apartment into the hallway. First, feel the door. If it is hot, use another way out. If the door is cool, leave by the nearest exit.
- If an announcement can be heard over your building's public address system, listen carefully and follow directions.
- Never use elevators in a fire! Use the stairs.
- Close all doors behind you to slow fire spread. Leave doors UNLOCKED.
- If your planned escape route becomes smoky, get down on your hands and knees and crawl. Smoke rises, so the cleanest air is near the floor.
- Never go back into the building. Go directly to your planned meeting place and stay there. If you think someone is trapped inside, notify the fire department.
- If you cannot escape your apartment, stuff wet towel, sheets, or clothes around the door and vents to keep smoke out.
- Call the fire department and tell them where you are. If no smoke is coming into the room, you are in, open a window slightly both at the top and the bottom. Stay low and wave a bright cloth, towel, or sheet out the window to signal your location. Do **not** break windows.

Remember, by accepting responsibility to keep your apartment or condo fire safe, you are not only protecting yourself, but your neighbors as well. A little bit of planning and awareness can make the difference between safety and disaster... for everyone!