

HOUSING

## FIRE PREPAREDNESS WORKSHOP 2 FIRE RESPONSE



FIRE PREPAREDNESS WORKSHOP 2**Fire Response**

| Topics   | Equipment & Materials:   | Total Time |
|--|--|------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fire and Fire Extinguishers</li> <li>2. Steps to Fighting a Fire</li> <li>3. Safety Tools and Evacuation Guidelines</li> <li>4. After a Fire</li> <li>5. Know the Risks</li> <li>6. Resources</li> </ol> | <p><u>Equipment &amp; Materials:</u></p> <p>✓ Markers<br/>✓ Flip chart<br/>✓ Photocopies of handouts</p> | 80 Minutes |

**1****FIRE AND FIRE EXTINGUISHERS****Types of Fires**

Fires are divided into classes based on what causes them. It's important to know the type of fire you're dealing with because it affects how fast the fire spreads, how dangerous it is, and how to put it out. Here are the main types:

- **Class A:** These fires start from things like wood, paper, cloth, candles, trash, or plastic – basically, everyday materials.
- **Class B:** These fires involve flammable liquids like oil, alcohol, paint, propane, solvents, and gasoline, but **NOT** cooking oil.
- **Class C:** These are electrical fires, usually caused by faulty wires or equipment.
- **Class D:** These are fires that involve super-hot metals, particularly alkali metals like sodium, potassium, aluminum, and magnesium. These are rare in everyday life.
- **Class K:** These fires come from cooking oils, like vegetable oil and animal fats, often in kitchens.

**ASK THE GROUP:** What if you don't know what type of fire it is? RUN!

Presenter(s)

Section Time

15 Minutes

**Types of Extinguishers**

There are different fire extinguishers for different types of fires. You've probably noticed they have A-B-C printed on them. The letters represent class types of fires that the extinguisher is suitable for:

- A - Ordinary stuff like wood or paper fires
- B - Fires caused by liquids
- C - Electrical fires

**Quick Tips:**

A-B-C extinguishers won't work for fires from cooking oil or metals.

Don't use water on electrical fires, fires with liquids, or cooking oil fires!

## 2

## STEPS TO FIGHTING A FIRE

## Deciding to Fight a Fire

Always call 911, and notify and evacuate other tenants before using an extinguisher. Keep in mind that you should always prioritize evacuation.

You should never attempt to fight a fire with an extinguisher if any of the following is true:

- You are uncertain of how to use it
- The fire is spreading beyond the immediate area where it started
- You are uncertain about the cause (or you are not able to find the correct type of extinguishers)
- The fire could block your escape route. If your only escape route has already been blocked, find a shelter-in-place to secure yourself.
- You are alone.

Trust your instincts. If your instincts tell you not to do so, run.

What to do if you can't put out the fire:

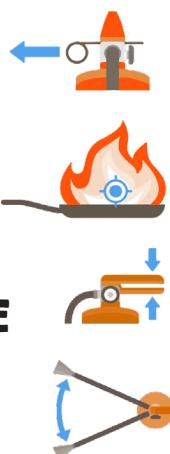
- Make sure your neighbours are informed.
- Make sure 911 has been called.
- Make sure the alarm is pulled.
- Leave the room/building and close the door behind you.

| Presenter(s) | Section Time |
|--------------|--------------|
| _____        | 15 Minutes   |

## How to Use a Fire Extinguisher

**ASK THE GROUP:** Does anyone know what acronym helps to remember how to use a fire extinguisher?

**PULL**  
**AIM**  
**SQUEEZE**  
**SWEEP**



Pull the pin that unlocks the operating handle

Aim the extinguisher low at the base of the fire.

Squeeze the lever on the extinguisher to discharge the agent.

Sweep the nozzle or hose from side to side, and continue to sweep the extinguisher back and forth at the base of the flames until the fire is out or the extinguisher is empty.

**If you use it:**

Make sure you use up the extinguisher.  
Don't put it back after using it.

Call 3-1-1 or ask the landlord to replace it.

## 3

**SAFETY TOOLS & EVACUATION GUIDELINES**

When there's a fire, your safety is the top priority. Don't go back inside the building. Call 911, and ensure others are safe while waiting for firefighters. Here are some safety tools that you may consider using:

**Close the Door Behind You**

Closing the door behind you when leaving your place prevents the fire from spreading and thus protects your safety and properties. You should also keep the fire doors in your building closed.

**Implement a Muster Point/Station**

After an emergency evacuation, it's important to gather at a specific spot called a muster point. Think of it as a safe meeting place where everyone can find each other easily. You need to inform your neighbours of the muster point.

- Pick a spot that's easy to reach, away from the building, and safe.
- Make sure the path to the muster point is clear and free from obstacles.
- Once there, do a headcount to ensure everyone got out safely.

**Implement a Fire Warden Program**

**ASK THE GROUP:** Does your building have a fire warden?

Fire wardens play a vital role in fire preparedness and fire response. If your building doesn't have one, you can create a plan and choose interested neighbours. During a fire emergency, their responsibilities are to:

1. Make sure alarms are activated.
2. Make sure doors are closed.
3. Ensure escape routes are clear.
4. Perform a headcount at the muster point to inform firefighters about tenants still in the building.
5. Assist with evacuation if it's safe.

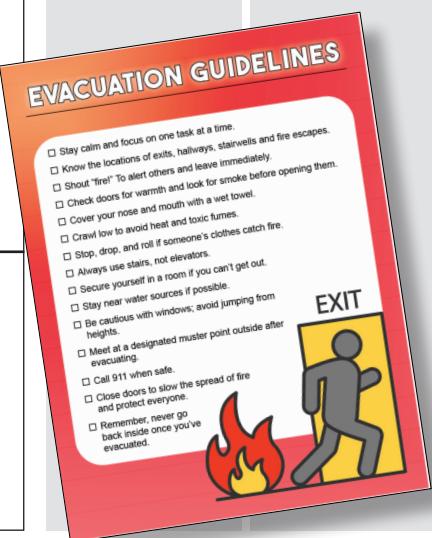
**Evacuation Guidelines**

Review "Evacuation Guidelines" handout. They can be practiced through mock fire drills with your neighbours.

When it comes to an emergency such as a fire, safety also means preparedness and planning. We are going to talk more about engaging your neighbours in emergency planning in the third workshop.

| Presenter(s) | Section Time |
|--------------|--------------|
|              |              |

15 Minutes



## 4

**AFTER A FIRE**

Returning to a building immediately after a fire, even if it appears extinguished, is not safe. There's a potential for the fire to reignite at any time. Be careful and avoid rushing back in.

Here's what you can do:

- **Listen to the Authorities** if it is safe to enter
- **Be Patient:** Wait for at least 30 minutes to ensure the fire doesn't start again.
- **Stay Alert** and don't ignore any signs of smoke or fire.
- **Always have a plan to escape quickly** in case the fire starts again.

**Fire Watch and Fire Safety Equipment**

Make sure that all fire alarm systems are working. Implement a fire watch if any part of the Fire Safety Equipment is shut down as we mentioned in the first workshop. The Fire Department may help reset the fire alarm system once everything's clear. DON'T BE TOO EAGER TO RESET THE SYSTEM.

**Resetting Smoke Detectors: Quick Steps**

Smoke Detectors hardwired into the electrical system within the building:

1. Turn off your home's main circuit breaker.
2. Take down the alarm, unplug it, and remove the battery.
3. Press the test button for 15 seconds; an alarm will briefly sound, then stop.
4. Reinsert the battery, reconnect the power cable, and remount the detector. Turn the breaker back on. It will chirp to show the power is back.

Battery-operated smoke detectors:

1. Take out the battery.
2. Press the test button for 15 seconds; an alarm will briefly sound, then stop.
3. Put the battery back; the detector will chirp to indicate it's connected.

Resetting Pull Stations and Alarm Panels:

Only emergency responders or building personnel should attempt this.

| Presenter(s) | Section Time |
|--------------|--------------|
| _____        | 15 Minutes   |

## 5

## KNOW THE RISKS

## Ignoring Alarms

In New York City in 2022, a tragic fire took the lives of 19 people in their building. (Handout of article)

This could have been prevented: *"Smoke alarms were located throughout the building, but several residents said they were used to hearing false alarms and initially didn't think anything of it. It wasn't until some residents saw smoke and heard cries for help that they realized this wasn't a false alarm."*

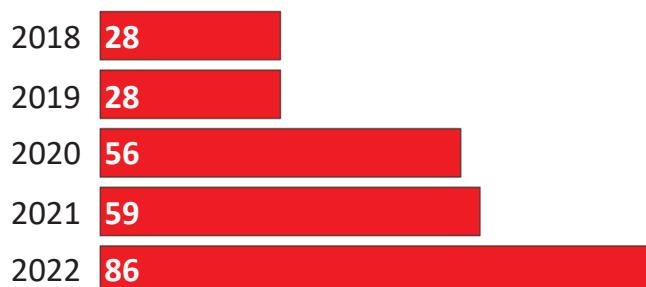
It's better to be safe than sorry. Here are some simple reminders:

- Always check if there's a real emergency in the building. Open your door to check if you can see any smoke or flames.
- Talk to your neighbours if you can.
- If something is happening, leave immediately and go outside.
- Close the door behind you when you leave your room.

## Fire-related Deaths in B.C.

The report from 2022 by the B.C. Office of the Fire Commissioner shows that the number of deaths caused by fires in the province has been going up dramatically since 2018. In 2022, there were 86 fire-related deaths in B.C., which is a huge 207% increase from 2018. That means the situation has gotten a lot worse. Just last year, fire-related deaths increased by 46% compared to the previous year, with more than 9,000 reported fires in the province.

## Fire-related deaths in BC 2018-2022



*Source: Officer of the Fire Commissioner*

Presenter(s)

Section Time

15 Minutes

## Fire Injuries

### Burn injuries

Burns caused by fires are not just skin injuries; they can also harm your muscles, bones, nerves, blood vessels, and even your breathing system. They disrupt how your body normally works, affecting things like how fluids are balanced, how your body controls temperature, and even how well you can move your joints or use your hands. Apart from the physical damage, burn victims often deal with emotional and psychological challenges that can last a while.

Here are some simple tips to deal with burns:

- If you get a burn, cool it with faucet-cold water. You can also place a cool, water-soaked cloth(s) on the burn.
- Don't use ice cubes or icy water if you can avoid it.
- For burns caused by dry powders like dry lime, start by brushing them away to prevent them from turning into a flammable liquid when mixed with water. Once the powder is cleared, rinse the area thoroughly with water for 20 minutes.
- Avoid putting ointment or grease on a fresh burn as it can trap heat. Let the burn cool down naturally first, and then use ointment to prevent infection.
- For severe burns, call 9-1-1 immediately.

### Inhalation Injuries and Killing Fumes

In just 3.5 minutes, a house fire can get incredibly hot, reaching over 593 degrees Celsius. Even in rooms that aren't on fire, temperatures can climb above 300 degrees. Breathing in the superheated gases can severely harm your respiratory system, and just one breath can lead to life-threatening inhalation injuries.

Inhalation injuries occur when individuals breathe in hot air, smoke, or chemicals, resulting in a range of severe consequences, including blocked airways, difficulty breathing, body-wide poisoning, and, ultimately, respiratory failure. When evacuating, cover your mouth and nose with a wet towel to minimize the risk of inhaling these harmful substances.

### CO Poisoning Awareness

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a dangerous gas that you can't see or smell. It's created when fuels don't burn completely. Breathing in CO can cause symptoms like headaches, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. Here are some tips to protect yourself:

- Never move a barbecue with hot charcoal indoors.
- Don't use a gas range to heat a room.
- Install CO detectors at home (as discussed in our previous workshop).
- Always ensure proper ventilation.
- Maintain gas and fuel-burning appliances like furnaces, gas ranges, water heaters, and fireplaces regularly.

## 6

## RESOURCES

Vancouver Fire Rescue Services: 9-1-1

Ambulance: 9-1-1

Non-emergency Fire Report: 3-1-1

Getting in Touch with 911

**ASK THE GROUP:** What will you say on a call with 911?

- Clearly say the address, including nearby street names or buildings. Be as specific as you can.
- Use compass directions (north, south, east, west) instead of left or right.
- Provide your phone number and name.
- Describe the emergency, like “There is a fire at XXX building.”

For fire emergencies, be ready to answer questions like:

- What's on fire and how bad is it?
- Did you see flames or just smoke?
- What colour is the smoke?
- Are there people inside the building?
- Do you know how the fire started?
- Are there things nearby that the fire could spread to (other buildings, trees, dry grass, etc.)?

Presenter(s)

Section Time

5 Minutes



# EVACUATION GUIDELINES

- Stay calm and focus on one task at a time.
- Know the locations of exits, hallways, stairwells and fire escapes.
- Shout "fire!" To alert others and leave immediately.
- Check doors for warmth and look for smoke before opening them.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a wet towel.
- Crawl low to avoid heat and toxic fumes.
- Stop, drop, and roll if someone's clothes catch fire.
- Always use stairs, not elevators.
- Secure yourself in a room if you can't get out.
- Stay near water sources if possible.
- Be cautious with windows; avoid jumping from heights.
- Meet at a designated muster point outside after evacuating.
- Call 911 when safe.
- Close doors to slow the spread of fire and protect everyone.
- Remember, never go back inside once you've evacuated.

EXIT



# Bronx Building Residents Say Fire Alarm Often Went Off, Ignored Sound Before Deadly Blaze

Published Jan 10, 2022 at 3:06 PM EST

By [Katie Wermus](#)

AP Fellow

Residents in the Bronx apartment building that caught fire January 9, 2022, said the fire alarms would frequently go off and they ignored the initial warning because they thought the smoke detectors were a false alarm.

The 19-story high-rise caught fire on Sunday killing 19 people, including nine children, making it the deadliest fire in three decades, authorities said. Dozens remain in the hospital, and 13 remain in critical care.

Smoke alarms were located throughout the building, but several residents said they were used to hearing false alarms and initially didn't think anything of it. It wasn't until some residents saw smoke and heard cries for help that they realized this wasn't a false alarm.

"So many of us were used to hearing that fire alarm go off, it was like second nature to us," said resident Karen Dejesus.

Some residents reported they couldn't see anything because of how thick the smoke was. The only thing they could do was wait for firefighters to rescue them.

Luis Rosa lived on the 13th-floor and said he also believed it was another false alarm, but once he opened the door of his apartment to see what was going on, all he saw was smoke.

Rosa didn't think he could run down the stairs without suffocating. "All we could do was wait," he said.

Other residents tried to escape the flames but passed out from smoke inhalation. Firefighters

found victims on every floor and several were in respiratory and cardiac arrest, said Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro.

Investigators determined the fire was caused by a malfunctioning electric space heater.

Mayor Eric Adams called it an "unspeakable tragedy" at a news conference near the scene.

"This tragedy is not going to define us," Adams said. "It is going to show our resiliency."

Adams lowered the death toll, saying that two fewer people were killed than originally thought. Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro said patients were taken to seven hospitals and "there was a bit of a double count."

The dead included children as young as 4 years old, said City Council Member Oswald Feliz.

The flames damaged only a small part of the building, but smoke poured through the apartment's open door and turned stairwells—the only method of escape in a building too tall for fire escapes—into dark, ash-choked death traps.

Adams said the building had self-closing doors and that investigators were looking into whether a door malfunctioned.

"There may have been a maintenance issue with this door. And that is going to be part of the ... ongoing investigation," the mayor told ABC's "Good Morning America."



Some residents of the burned Bronx apartment building said they ignored the fire alarms because they were frequently going off before the incident. Above, emergency first responders remain at the scene after an intense fire... [More](#)

Limp children were given oxygen after they were carried out. Some who fled had soot-covered faces.

Firefighters continued making rescues even after their air supplies ran out, Adams said.

"Their oxygen tanks were empty, and they still pushed through the smoke," he said.

An investigation was underway to determine how the fire spread and whether anything could have been done to prevent or contain the blaze, Nigro said.

Large, new apartment buildings are required to have sprinkler systems and interior doors that swing shut automatically to contain smoke and deprive fires of oxygen, but those rules do not apply to thousands of the city's older buildings.

Dejesus said she thought it was a false alarm. "Not until I actually saw the smoke coming in the door did I realize it was a real fire, and I began to hear people yelling, 'Help! Help! Help!'"

Dejesus, who was in her two-floor apartment with her son and 3-year-old granddaughter, immediately called family members and ran to get towels to put under the door. But smoke began coming down her stairs before the 56-year-old resident could get the towels, so the three ran to the back of the apartment.

"It was so scary," she said. "Just the fact that we're in a building that's burning and you don't know how you're going to get out. You don't know if the firefighters are going to get to you in time."

Firefighters broke down her door and helped all three out the window and down a ladder to safety. Dejesus clung to her rescuer on the way down.

Hassane Badr told The New York Times that two of his siblings, both children, were killed and that a 25-year-old cousin remained unaccounted for. Badr, 28, waited at Jacobi Medical Center for news about his 12-year-old brother, who was suffering from serious smoke inhalation. A 5-year-old sister was at another hospital.

"I'm thinking like I'm dreaming, this is not true. You hear people crying, my goodness," Badr told the newspaper. "To be honest, I'm not believing it right now."

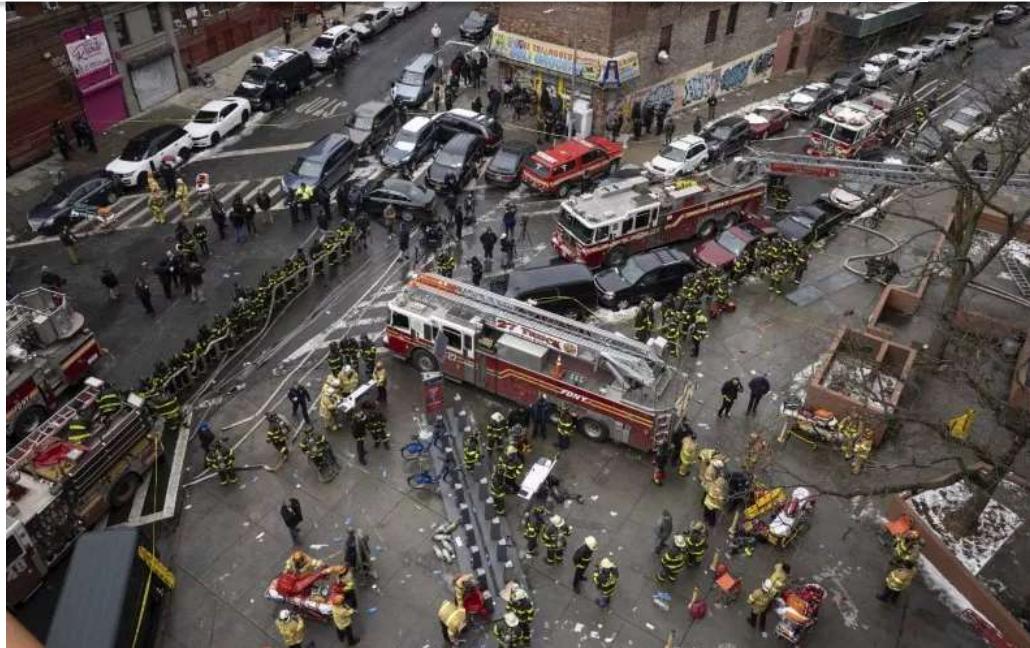
Badr's family, 11 people from Mali, lived in a three-bedroom apartment on the third floor.

Mahamadou Toure struggled to put his grief into words outside the hospital emergency room where his 5-year-old daughter and the girl's teenage brother died, according to the Daily News.

"Right now my heart is very ...," Toure trailed off while speaking to the New York Daily News. "It's OK. I give it to God."

The fire was New York City's deadliest since 1990, when 87 people died in an arson at the Happy Land social club, also in the Bronx. The borough was also the scene of a deadly apartment building fire in 2017 that killed 13 people and a 2007 fire, also started by a space heater, that killed nine.

Sunday's fire happened just days after 12 people, including eight children, were killed in a house fire in Philadelphia.



Firefighters work outside an apartment building after a fire in the Bronx, Sunday, January 9, 2022, in New York.

ASSOCIATED PRESS/YUKI IWAMURA