



## **PLAN AHEAD...FIRE SAFETY IN APARTMENT BUILDINGS**

### **Plan Ahead...Fire Safety in Apartment Buildings**

#### **Fire Safety is Your Responsibility**

Every fire is dangerous. But you can survive a fire if you know what to do.

The law requires that every apartment building have certain fire safety features. Ask your building management or your fire department to tell you about the fire safety features in your building. Then you should plan what you will do if there is a fire. The questions in the rest of this brochure will help you. Your local fire department can also help you answer these questions.

In a fire, you will not have very much time to decide what to do. So plan ahead. It may save your life.

You must know how you will escape from the building if there is a fire. In fact you need at least **two** ways to escape, because one may be blocked by smoke. If you cannot escape, you must know how to protect yourself from the smoke. Learn how to do these things **now**.

#### **Remember**

- In a fire, most people die from smoke, not from flames. Smoke makes it hard for you to see, and even two deep breaths of smoke can make it hard to think clearly or stay awake. You must avoid smoke.
- The apartment where the fire starts is a dangerous place. Get everyone out, and close the door behind you.
- Most fires that kill people occur at night, when everyone is asleep. That's why you need a smoke alarm near rooms where people sleep. Test your smoke alarms once a month to make sure they are working properly.
- Fire and smoke move very quickly, and the conditions where you are may change in an instant. Make sure you know what to do.

#### **Plan Ahead, It May Save Your Life**

#### **Personal Fire Safety**



Answer Yes or No to the following questions:

- **Do you have at least one smoke alarm in your apartment, and are you sure it works?** Smoke alarms save lives by giving you early warning of a fire in your apartment.
- **Do you know how to protect yourself from smoke?** Remember, most people die from smoke, not fire.
- **Do you have a roll of duct tape?** Duct tape is a special tape available from hardware stores. Use it to block smoke from entering your apartment through spaces around your door, vents and other openings.
- **Do you know how you are going escape from your building if there is a fire?** Most apartment buildings have at least two exit stairways. Find out where these are and practice using them. Know which floors you can use to cross from one stairway to another.
- **If you are unable to use stairs in an emergency, have you told your landlord or building manager that you will need help?** Your apartment number can be added to the fire safety plan, so fire fighters will know that you may need to be rescued.
- **Do you know where the fire alarms are on your floor, and how to pull them?** You will have to use the fire alarm if you discover a fire on your floor.
- **Have you arranged a place outside the building where you will meet everyone you share your apartment with after you leave?** Having a meeting place gives you confidence that everyone got out safely.
- **Do you know the telephone number to call if there is a fire?** Keep this telephone number in a place where you can find it fast in an emergency.

If you answer "no" to any of these questions, you should get the information you need by speaking to your building management or your fire department.

### **General Fire Safety Features in Buildings**

- **Do you know what the fire alarm sounds like?** Make sure that everyone you live with knows what to do when they hear the fire alarm.
- **Can you hear the fire alarm in your apartment?** The fire alarm should be loud enough to be heard in your bedroom.



- **Are all the exit doors clearly marked?** All exit doors should have a sign that says "EXIT".
- **Are your corridors and stairways kept clear of debris or obstructions, and are they well lit?** Your landlord must make sure exit routes have adequate lighting and are never blocked.
- **Are Emergency instructions posted on your floor?** They will tell you what to do if there is a fire in your building.
- **Is there an approved fire safety plan for your building?** The landlord must have a fire safety plan approved by the fire department, and must follow it.
- **Are your stairway doors equipped with automatic closers and latches that work, and are the doors to the stairway kept closed at all times?** Your landlord must keep doors working properly so that they limit the spread of smoke and fire.

If you answer "no" to any of these questions, you should get the information you need by speaking to your building management or your fire department.

### **Fire Safety Features in High Buildings Only**

- **Is there a voice communication system in your building?** Buildings higher than 12 storeys must have a voice communication system.
- **Can you hear messages clearly in the corridor?** Speakers in your apartment or the hallway are used to give you important information if there is a fire.
- **Does your apartment door have an automatic closer and does it work?** Having the door close automatically prevents smoke and fire from spreading into the corridor.
- **Are any of the doors leading from the stairway into the corridors kept locked?** Some stairway doors may be locked for security reasons.
- **Are corridors and stairways equipped with emergency lighting?** Emergency lighting will keep stairs lit even if the electricity to the building stops working because of a fire.

If you answer "no" to any of these questions, you should get the information you need by speaking to your building management or your fire department.

**If you think something in your building is unsafe, call your local Fire Department**



## Your Rights and Responsibilities

Your landlord must keep your apartment building in good repair and safe for living in, and comply with the Fire Code. If there is a fire your landlord must repair damages to the building in a reasonable time. Any fire safety features must be repaired as quickly as possible.

If there is a fire in your building, you will probably be responsible for fire or smoke damage to your own belongings. You should consider getting tenant's insurance coverage for your belongings, and to cover your expenses for temporary accommodation.

If the fire is your fault, you may also have to pay for damage to other people's property, and to the building. Make sure the insurance you buy protects you from this liability.

You can get more information about insurance from your insurance agent or broker.

For more information on the laws that protect tenants, you can contact the Rent Control Office in your area. The telephone number is in the blue pages of the telephone book.

Never damage the fire safety systems in your building, or allow other people to damage them. You risk your life and the lives of other people if you do. It is a criminal offence to damage any fire safety system.

Remember, Fire Safety Begins With You