

Mastering the 10-Minute Mini-Lesson



Topic: Importance of Fire Alarm Systems and Home Fire Escape Planning in Multi-Unit Dwellings

Audience: Adults who live in a multi-unit dwelling (apartment, condominium, etc.)

Lesson Objective: By the end of the mini-lesson, participants will be able to:

- Describe the sound of the fire alarm system and how to respond.
- Explain the importance of escape planning in a multi-unit dwelling.

Educational Messages to Review

Ch. 1: Home Smoke Alarms

- 1.3.2 Make sure everyone in the home understands the sound of the smoke alarm and knows how to respond.

Ch. 4: Home Fire Escape

- 4.2 Planning

Step 1: Introduction/Hook (2 minutes)

- Greet the audience and thank them for their time. Let them know you are happy to help them learn more about how to keep families safe from fire.
- Share your connection to the community.
- **HOOK:** Ask the audience to
 - Visualize the building you live in.
 - Think about the way you leave the building.
- **Ask:** Do you leave the same way each time?
- Now: Imagine you hear the fire alarm. You need to get outside but your usual exit is blocked.
- **Ask:** How would you feel? Would you know where to go?
- Explain that many people always use the same entrances and exits to buildings but it is important to know different ways to leave in case your usual exit is blocked.
- Share the purpose of your visit: *"Today we are going to talk about how important it is to know the sound of your building's fire alarm system and how to respond appropriately every time. We are going to learn how important it is to have a fire escape plan in case there is a fire in your building."*

Step 2: Body of the Presentation (7 minutes)

- **Ask:** Have you ever heard the fire alarm in your building?

Explain that it is important to know the sound of the fire alarm. It is important to listen and respond every time the fire alarm sounds. It means there could be fire. You have to follow your fire escape plan and get outside when you hear the fire alarm. Many people become unworried because of too many fire drills or false alarms. Think about what could happen if you hear the fire alarm and you ignore it.

Fire escape plans are important for all homes. Whether your building has one floor or 50, it is important that you and your family are ready to respond to a fire alarm. Everyone needs to know what to do and where to go if there is a fire. As we discussed earlier, people often get nervous if there is an emergency but if you make a plan and practice it, then you will know exactly what to do if there was a fire.

- **Ask:** What are the things you need to know to make a fire escape plan?
 - Two ways out of every room in your apartment
 - Locations of all available exit stairs from your floor
 - Locations of all available exits in your building
 - Location of an outside meeting place where everyone will meet. An outside meeting place should be a safe distance in front of your building.



Your Source for SAFETY Information

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*Many buildings have an evacuation plan. The plan should show what the residents are supposed to do if there is an emergency. It should be posted in places where everyone can see and review it. The building management should have a fire drill with residents at least once a year. Be sure to take part in your building fire drills. Sometimes the safest thing to do is to shelter in place. Some building plans require residents to go to a specific spot in the building and wait for help. It is important for all residents to know where those assigned waiting spots are.

- **Ask:** Do you have an elevator in your building?
- If there is a fire, use the stairs to get out. You should never use the elevator unless you are directed to by the fire department. Make sure to practice using the stairs as part of your escape plan. If someone in your family has difficulty climbing down steps, make sure to include a contingency for this into your plan.

Step 3: Conclusion (1 minute)

- Remind participants the how important it is to know the sound of their building's fire alarm system and to respond appropriately every time the fire alarm sounds.
- Stress the importance of having a fire escape plan in case there is a fire in your building.
- Provide each participant with the Safety Tip Sheet, *High Rise Apartment & Condominium Safety* to read later. (available at nfpa.org/safetytips)
- Share your contact information and encourage attendees to contact you if they have any questions or concerns about other fire safety issues.
- Thank everyone for their time and inviting you to speak.

