

# WHAT WOULD YOU DO IN A HOME FIRE EMERGENCY?

## *Seconds or Minutes to Save Your Life*

A person confronted by a home fire emergency goes through three phases:

- **discovering** the fire,
- **taking action**, and
- **reaching safety** or being injured or killed.

What actions should we take once we have discovered there's a danger of a hostile fire in our home? It depends on how we assess the fire situation.

- **It may be controllable.** For example, a pot of cooking oil erupting in flames on a hot stove. All that may be needed in the early stages of such a fire is to turn off the stove and slide a tight fitting lid over the pot.
- **In the case of a small-sized fire** a fire extinguisher may be used. The operator should be close to an exit to allow quick escape if the fire gets out of control.
- **A rapidly spreading fire and dense black smoke**, swift action by warning everyone to evacuate would be the right sequence of actions. In such cases a pre-practiced fire escape plan can be put into automatic action.

Essentials of a fire escape plan are:

- **Identify two-exits** from every room.
- **Feel the door with the back of your hand to ensure it is not hot; then open door cautiously.** If fire and smoke are suspected on the other side use your second exit to escape.
- **Crawl low under smoke.**
- **Get out as quickly as possible;** everyone meets at a previously agreed upon spot outside the house.
- **Call the fire department** from a neighbour's phone.

High-rise Building:

- **Carefully assess the situation** deciding whether to stay behind or leave the building.
- **A pre-planned fire emergency procedure** for the high-rise building developed and practiced with the assistance of building management and your local fire department will reduce the chances of a tragedy.

## **Risk Factors**

Research shows males have a higher tendency than females to fight fires, return to burning buildings, remain behind to rescue property or move through smoke. These behaviours are reflected in fire death statistics that show twice as many males dying in fires than females. Researchers have also confirmed the value of fire safety education. They found that people who had received previous training on what to do in a fire were more likely to raise the alarm or evacuate as the first action in a fire emergency. The numerous lives saved by children taught "Learn Not To Burn," also confirms that prior knowledge about fire dangers can be a lifesaver for oneself and others.

## **What Should You Do in a Home Fire Emergency?**

The only answer to this is - be prepared. Become knowledgeable about fire hazards and prevent them. Install, test and maintain smoke alarms and put a fire escape plan into practice.