



Practise Fire Safety

National Fire Prevention Week is October 7 to 13, 2012. This year's focus is practising a fire escape plan that gives you two ways out of your home.

Most people think that they have about six to 10 minutes to escape their home after a smoke alarm sounds. In reality, you may have less than two minutes. A typical living room fire can threaten an entire house in just a few minutes. Having an escape plan and practising it will help you get out faster and could save lives.

Know your exits and get out safely

Even though you may have lived in your rental unit for several years, you may not know the best way to get out fast. In a fire, panic, smoke and darkness can cloud your senses and block your view. They can turn a familiar building into a different setting. Having and practising a simple fire escape plan will greatly increase the chances of you and your family getting out safely.

Fire Prevention Canada has several useful tips.

- Make a map of your home. Mark a door and a window that can be used to get out of every room.
- Choose a meeting place outside, in front of your home or residential complex. This is where everyone can meet once they've escaped. Draw a picture of your outside meeting place on your escape plan for any children in the home.
- Write the emergency phone number for the fire department on your escape plan.
- If you have children, have a grown-up sound the smoke alarm and practise your escape plan with everyone who lives in your home.
- Keep your escape plan on the refrigerator and practise it twice a year or whenever anyone in your home celebrates a birthday.

For more information on creating a fire escape plan, go to the Office of the Fire Commissioner at: www.firecomm.gov.mb.ca/docs/public_education/general_fp_mat/my_home_escape_plan.pdf.

Stay or Go: Fire in a multi-level residential complex

When a fire alarm goes off in a multi-level residential complex, you have to decide whether it is safer to leave your unit, or stay inside and wait for help.

Some signs that it may be better to **stay in the unit** are:

- The door to the hallway is hot to touch.
- The corridor or hallway is full of smoke or flames.
- The stairway is full of smoke or flames.

If it is safer to stay in your unit, close your door and stuff wet towels at the base. Turn off all appliances and go to a room with a window. Hang a sheet out of the window to tell firefighters where you are. Close the door to the room and stuff wet towels around any vents and the bottom of the door. If it is possible, call 911 and let them know where you are. Stay as low as possible in the room.

Some signs that it is safe to **leave your unit** are:

- The door to the hallway is cool to the touch.
- The corridor or hallway is clear of smoke and there are no signs of flames.
- The stairway is clear of smoke and there are no signs of flames.

If it is safe to leave your unit, stay low and go to the nearest exit. Once you are out, go to the meeting place you have set up with your family.

If a fire starts in your apartment, get everyone out, close the door and pull the nearest smoke alarm. Once you are safely out of the building, call 911 to report the fire. Never go back into a burning building.

Talk to your landlord or caretaker to see if there is a fire safety plan in place for your building or complex. Make sure you and your family know where all the exits are and never ignore a fire alarm.

(cont'd)

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Helping new Manitobans understand fire safety tips

Manitoba tenants who are new to the country and the province can increase their knowledge about fire safety by going to the National Fire Protection Association website address noted below. The site has easy-to-read handouts in many languages and topics include:

- heating safety
- cooking safety
- electrical safety
- escape plans

The handouts are available in several languages:

- Arabic
- Farsi
- Indonesian
- Khmer
- Korean
- Simplified and traditional Chinese
- Spanish
- Vietnamese

As a landlord or caretaker of a residential complex, you may want to print off some of the fire safety handouts for new Canadians who are renting from you.

National Fire Protection Association website: <http://www.nfpa.org/> and search “other language handouts”.

Fall-proofing Residential Complexes & Rental Units



Landlords, caretakers and tenants can work together to make sure common areas and rental units are safe physical places for everyone – an issue of special importance for older tenants. Falls are the most common cause of hospitalization and injury-related deaths for older adults in Manitoba. Fractures and complications from falling can lead to

immobility, disability and death. Below are some suggestions to improve safety and quality of life.

In common areas and rental units

- Repair loose floorboards, carpets and curling vinyl so people don't trip.
- Secure loose rugs to the floor (without damaging the floor) or remove them completely.
- Keep passages and hallways clear of clutter and electrical cords.
- Keep all areas, including stairways, well lit.
- Make sure stairs have safety treads and secure handrails.
- Install grab rails and bars, ramps, etc. for tenants with limited mobility.

In rental units

- Use nonslip mats, or even a secure seat in bathtubs and showers.
- Install a secure grab bar in your shower or bathtub (ask your landlord about this)
- Store items you need daily (clothing, dishes, food etc.) in easy-to-reach places to avoid using step stools.

Install night lights and an easy-to-reach bedside lamp so you can see clearly if you need to get up at night

Keep a few flashlights in easy to find spots in case the power goes out.

SafetyAid

Older renters in Manitoba can contact A&O: Support Services for Older Adults to discuss SafetyAid, a home safety and falls prevention program. SafetyAid provides home safety and fall prevention audits in homes of adults aged 65 and above.

A SafetyAid team will install security devices and provide falls prevention items to older adults who are eligible. This can include installing deadbolts and peepholes. They will also help with non-slip bathmats, nightlights, ice grips for canes etc. **In rental units, your landlord must approve the installation of any safety device.**

For more information, call A&O toll free at 1-888-333-1808 or 204-956-6440 in Winnipeg.

Preventing Home Invasions



- If a service person comes to your door, use caution. Landlords should notify tenants if they have people coming to do work in your unit.
- Don't let any workers or service people in if you haven't heard from your landlord and you didn't arrange to have the person come – even if they say it's some kind of emergency. Call the landlord, or call the person's business to check that they are who they say they are and that they have a good reason to be there.

At least 21 per cent of home invasions are done by someone the victim knows only casually, or an acquaintance. If people you know casually come to your door, ask yourself if they have a good reason to be there. If not, don't open your door.

Manitoba Justice has a Victim Services Branch to help crime victims across the province. You can call them, toll free at 1-866-484-2846; or go to www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/services.

While nobody can guarantee complete protection from home invasions, there are many ways landlords and tenants can reduce the risks.

- If you own rental units or buildings, make sure the building and unit locks are in good working order.
- If your buildings have electronic entrance buzzers and/or closed circuit TV, make sure they are always in good repair.
- If you own rental property, post signs at all entrances to remind tenants not to let strangers into the building.
- If you live in a secure building that has an entrance buzzer in your unit, never press the buzzer to let people you don't know into the building.
- Tenants should never let strangers walk into a locked building behind them. Close the door behind you and make sure it's locked. If someone asks you to let them in, tell them to buzz the apartment of the person they are there to see.
- Keep your door locked and never open your door to strangers. If someone knocks on your door asking to use your phone to call for help, don't open the door. Offer to call for help for them.
- Ask your landlord about installing a wide-angle viewer (peephole) in your door.
- Even if you can see who's at the door, remember that home invaders come in any age, size or gender. Often, someone who looks innocent will knock on the door while others wait out of sight for you to open your door.

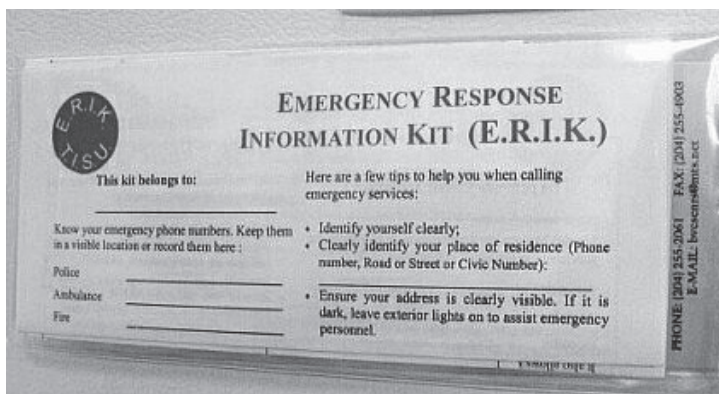


Emergency Response Information Kits

In an emergency, you or someone you know could benefit from giving emergency teams quick access to your medical information. The **emergency response information kit** (ERIK) is available for people who are chronically ill, have speech difficulties or other communication problems, seniors, people who have outside caregivers and people who live alone.

ERIKs give first responders instant medical information that can save lives in an emergency because they provide:

- an updated health information form
- a sticker for your door to let first responders know to look for your kit
- a magnetic plastic holder for your fridge
- a health care directive, or living will



To get your free ERIK, contact a Seniors Community Resource Council near you or go to: www.seniors.cimnet.ca/cim/19.dhtm; or in Winnipeg, call 311 on your phone and ask to speak to the Winnipeg Fire/Paramedic Service.

Need information?

Online
manitoba.ca/rtb

Offline
in person or by phone

Visit your branch office Monday to Friday
from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Winnipeg at 302-254 Edmonton Street
or call 204-945-2476

Brandon at 157-340 9th Street
or call 204-726-6230

Thompson at 113-59 Elizabeth Drive
or call 204-677-6496

Toll free 1-800-782-8403

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