



APARTMENT & HIGH-RISE FIRE

Fast Facts

- Each year an estimated 15,500 high-rise structure fires caused 60 civilian deaths, 930 injuries and \$252 million in property loss. ***
- High-rise fires are more injurious and cause more damage than all other structure fires. ***
- 69% of high-rise structure fires originate on the 4th floor or below; 60% occur in apartment buildings; 43% originate in the kitchen. ***
- High-rise structures include office buildings, hotels, apartment buildings and hospitals. ***
- The leading cause of high-rise fires is cooking (38%), but cause patterns vary by property type. **
- The number of home fires the American Red Cross has responded to has risen 10% since 2000.*
- Although not mandated for all buildings, [NFPA 101®](#), [Life Safety Code®](#), requires that workplaces, healthcare facilities, educational institutions and other occupancies provide evacuation/relocation plan information and routinely schedule and hold drills when practicable. ***
- High-rise building fire alarm systems are required to have emergency voice communication capability. Trained emergency personnel assess the emergency and can then broadcast a variety of specific messages to the occupants. ***

Prevention Tips:

- ✓ When looking for an apartment or high-rise home, look for one with an automatic sprinkler system. Sprinklers can extinguish a home fire in less time than it takes for the fire department to arrive.
- ✓ Find out who is responsible for maintaining the fire safety systems in your building. In many cases the installation and maintenance of smoke alarms and other systems is the responsibility of the landlord or property owner.
- ✓ Learn your building evacuation plan. Make sure every family member knows what to do if the fire alarm sounds. Plan and practice your escape plan together.
- ✓ Never lock fire exits, doorways, halls or stairways. Fire doors provide a way out during a fire and slow the spread of fire and smoke. Never prop stairway or other fire doors open.
- ✓ Ask your building manager to post evacuation plans in high traffic areas, such as lobbies.
- ✓ Learn the sound of your building's fire alarm and post emergency numbers near all telephones.
- ✓ Make sure the hallways and stairwells are free of clutter and that nothing is blocking the smoke alarms, fire extinguishers and other fire safety devices. Promptly report any sign of damage or malfunction to the building management.
- ✓ Draw an escape plan for your family. Identify all of the exits and stairways in your building, and the exits from each room in your apartment or condominium unit.
- ✓ Remember that emergency evacuation procedures can differ from building to building depending on the construction and safety features. Make sure you know the emergency evacuation procedures and exits specific to your building.
- ✓ Participate when your building practices its plan.

Sources: American Red Cross,* U.S. Fire Administration,** and the National Fire Protection Association.***