

SAFETY INFORMATION FOR BABYSITTERS

Plan Ahead for Safety

Planning and prevention are the keys to fire safety. Protect yourself and the children you're watching against fire by taking simple precautions.

Plan Your Escape

Every household should have an escape plan. When you babysit, discuss what to do in case of a fire with the adults in the household.

- Be familiar with their home. Learn all the exits, and know how to unlock doors and windows. Know two ways out of each room, especially bedrooms.
- All households should have a meeting place outside where everyone gathers after escaping a fire. Have the adults show you the meeting place, and don't confuse children by changing the plan.
- Discuss the escape plan and meeting place with the children. Make sure every child knows where to meet outside.
- With an adult, complete a list of Emergency Information.

Download an Emergency Information List

Carry it in your pocket. Be sure you know the location of a neighbor who will be home. In case of a fire, call the fire department from a neighbor's phone or portable cordless phone.

Put Away Matches and Lighters

Never smoke while babysitting. If you find matches, lighters, or other smoking-related materials, put them up high (preferably in a locked cabinet) where children can't see or reach them.

Be Kitchen Wise

Cook only if you have permission from the adults in the household. Never leave cooking food unattended. Set a timer to remind you to turn everything off.

Give Space Heaters Space

Keep anything that can burn - such as books, paper, and clothing - at least 3 feet away from space heaters. And keep children away from portable heaters and space heaters, too.

Turn Pot Handles In

Don't let pot handles stick out over the edge of the stove where children can bump or grab them. Turn handles in, pointing toward the center of the stove, to prevent spilling hot liquids or food.

Use Microwaves Safely

Never put anything into a microwave unless you are absolutely sure it is safe. Paper, glass, and microwave proof earthenware are safe. In many cases, metals are not. Read and follow the instructions on all packaged microwavable meals. Do not exceed recommended cooking times. If you are not sure of how to use the microwave, do not use it.

Keep children away from the microwave. Be careful when removing covers from microwavable containers; escaping steam can cause severe burns. Cool all foods sufficiently before serving them to children.

Never Leave Children Unattended

Supervise children when they are awake, and check on them often after they've gone to bed, until you are sure they are sound asleep. Even then, make sure you can hear them when they wake up.

In Case of Fire Crawl Low Under Smoke

If you encounter smoke while you are escaping a fire, use another exit route. If you must escape through smoke, remember that heat and smoke rise, so cleaner air is always near the floor. Crawl on your hands and knees, keeping your head 12 to 24 inches (30 to 60 centimeters) above the floor. Go first, making sure the children follow you.

Get Out! Stay Out!

If you smell smoke, hear a smoke alarm, or see flames, get everybody out. Don't wait for any reason. Go directly to your meeting place, and count heads to make sure everyone has escaped.

Call the Fire Department.

Take the children to a neighbor's home, and call the fire department from there. Give the fire department the complete address of the fire, and stay on the phone until you're told to hang up. Then call the children's parents

Don't Go Back

Watch children carefully while you're waiting for the fire department. Make sure no one goes back inside for any reason. Keep everyone a safe distance from the fire and out of the way of the firefighters.

If You Can't Get to the Children

If smoke or flames are blocking the way to the children's bedrooms, go straight to a neighbor and call the fire department. Tell them that the children are trapped inside and where they are.

Stop, Drop, and Roll

If your clothing catches fire: STOP, don't run. DROP to the ground, and cover your face with your hands. ROLL over and over until the fire goes out. Babysitters may have to help children do this. Pull the child to the ground, and roll him or her over and over to smother the flames.

Cool a Burn

The best first aid for burns is to run cool water over the burned area for 10 to 15 minutes. If a burn blisters or appears charred, get medical help immediately.