

# Fire Facts

Uncontrolled fire is the enemy. One of the military's strategies in fighting a battle is knowing the enemy. Most large businesses get to know their competitors to help them compete. Fire is both an enemy and a competitor. It will destroy anything and kill anyone wherever the opportunity exists and it will compete for the air you breathe and the space you need to escape.

Firefighters spend hours of extensive training on fire behavior and fire science education to prepare them to fight a fire. Knowing the way fire behaves is key to reacting to them and surviving them. This article is going to focus on the nature of fire so that you and your family have basic information on fire that may help them survive a fire if one occurs in your home.

- **Fire is FAST** – In less than 30 seconds, a small flame can turn into a major fire. In minutes thick smoke can fill a house, and the house can be engulfed in flames. Most residential fire occurs when people are asleep. There is only time to escape.
- **Fire is HOT** – Heat is more threatening than flames. A fire's heat alone can kill. Room temperatures in a fire can be 600 degrees at eye level. Inhaling super-hot air will scorch your lips, mouth, throat, and lungs.
- **Fire is DARK** – Fire is not bright like a campfire, it is pitch black in a structure fire. A fire starts out bright, but quickly produces black smoke and complete darkness. The black smoke can turn a house you have lived in for years in to a disorientating maze. Smoke travels much faster ahead of the flames.
- **Fire is TOXIC** – Along with smoke, toxic gases kill more people than flames. Most people who die in a fire never see the flames. Fire uses up the oxygen you need and produces poisonous gases that kill. Those gases can make you drowsy, disorientated, and short of breath. The odorless, colorless fumes can lull you into an unconscious state.
- **SAVE LIVES** – Working smoke detectors are the most important means to prevent death in a house fire. Smoke detectors provide an early warning allowing time for escape. The more detectors you have in your home the earlier the warning will be. Always follow the manufactures installation instructions.

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