

## Q&A about fires in the home

**This fact sheet gives you answers to questions about fires in domestic situations. The questions are divided into seven different categories.**

**Fire equipment = save lives & property in time**

### **Why must I have a smoke detector in my home?**

Fires can develop very quickly. In just a few minutes a room can become filled with toxic smoke and, in the worst case, engulfed in flames. This all happens faster than the emergency services are able to arrive on the scene. A smoke detector can give you an early warning – precious time you need to save your life, warn others and maybe also extinguish the fire.

### **What can I do to protect myself from fires in the home?**

You must have a functioning smoke detector. You will then be warned if fire breaks out. Acquire a fire blanket and a fire extinguisher since they enable you to extinguish smaller fires. Consider beforehand what you would do in an emergency situation. Discuss with your family what you should do if a fire breaks out.

### **Where should I put a smoke detector in my home?**

The smoke detector should be on the ceiling close to your bedroom. The smoke will not wake you. If you breathe in smoke when you are asleep, you may have no chance to save your life. The smoke detector signal will wake you so that you can save yourself and others in danger.



### **Where should I put smoke detector if I live in a house with an upper storey?**

Put a smoke detector on the ceiling above the stairs leading up to the upper storey. If a fire starts on the bottom storey, those upstairs will receive an early warning.

### **About the fact sheet**

This fact sheet is a support for those who intend to show the film *Det brinner i din lägenhet/ditt hus* (*There's a fire in your apartment/house*).



This symbol means that the information and exercises are concerned with a fire in a house or row house.

**How do I check that the smoke detector works?**

There is a button on the smoke detector. Press the button. If you hear no signal, you should change the battery.

**What kind of hand-held fire extinguisher should I have at home?**

There are different kinds at various prices. A hand-held fire extinguisher with 6 kilos of powder marked 43A 233B C is a good investment. It can put out small fires burning in various materials.

**Putting out a stove fire – What must I do?****How should I put out an oil/fat fire on the cooker?**

Smother the fire with a lid, a fire blanket, towel or something similar. If you throw water on burning oil/fat, you risk spreading the fire and being burned yourself.

**Evacuation****Why must I stay inside my apartment with the door closed if the stairwell is filled with smoke?**

Smoke from a fire is toxic. If you go out to the stairwell and inhale the smoke you will lose consciousness and possibly die. You must therefore stay inside your own apartment. You are safe there for 30 – 60 minutes. Phone 112 so that the emergency services are informed that you are inside the building.

**Can I stay inside my apartment if a fire breaks out elsewhere in the building?**

Yes, you should stay in your apartment. They are built in such a way that they resist fires for 30-60 minutes. That gives the emergency services time to reach you, put out the fire and guide you to safety. The company building these apartments must comply with regulations that stipulate they withstand a fire for 30-60 minutes.

**Why must I close the outer door behind me when leaving my apartment in the event of a fire?**

If you close the door behind you stop the smoke from the fire spreading into the stairwell. In that way you are protecting your neighbours and helping the emergency services.

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## **Smoke = a threat to your life**

### **What happens to my body if I breathe in smoke?**

There are substances in the smoke which will quickly poison your body and make it stop working normally. A few breaths will knock you out. This can happen very quickly. The hot smoke can also seriously burn your airway and lungs.

What substances are there in smoke?

- Carbon monoxide penetrates your red blood cells and prevents life-giving oxygen from being circulated round your body.
- Carbon dioxide pushes out life-giving oxygen and makes your brain turn off your breathing reflex.
- Soot particles prevent your lungs supplying oxygen to your body.

### **What should I do if smoke appears where I am?**

The dangerous smoke rises upwards, so you must stay down under the smoke. Get down on the floor. This will make it easier to see and breathe.

### **What should I do if I have breathed in smoke?**

Contact medical help for an assessment. If you find it difficult to breathe, phone 112 immediately.

## **Emergency number 112 = Where to get help**

### **When should I phone 112?**

112 is an emergency number you should phone if you need emergency help. For example, if there is a fire or somebody near you becomes acutely ill, is in a car accident or is assaulted.<sup>1</sup>

### **When is 112 open?**

You always get an answer when you phone emergency number 112. They answer 24 hours a day, on Sundays, holidays and weekdays. A call to 112 costs nothing both from both fixed and mobile telephones.

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<sup>1</sup> More information:

[www.sosalarm.se/sv/112/Informationsmaterial/Utbildningsmaterial-for-SFI-/](http://www.sosalarm.se/sv/112/Informationsmaterial/Utbildningsmaterial-for-SFI-/)

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### **What do the operators who answer 112 calls want to know?**

The operators who answer 112 calls want to know:

What has happened?

At what address?

What telephone number are you phoning from?

### **What help is sent when I phone 112?**

The operator who answers your 112 call decides what kind of help

to send. This could be an ambulance, the police, the fire brigade or lifeboat service.

### **Can I phone 112 even if my mobile refill is at zero?**

You can phone 112 from a mobile telephone even if the refill has reached zero. You do not need to use an area code when you phone 112.

### **Can I phone 112 even if I don't speak Swedish?**

Normally, the phone call is conducted in Swedish or English to enable the emergency operator to understand and rapidly send out help. Where time allows, the emergency operator can call on the services of an interpreter but this can delay the process.

### **How the emergency services work**

#### **How long will it take for help to arrive?**

- The time it takes for the emergency services to come varies. The reason is that people live at different distances from the fire station.
- If you live in a town, help should arrive within about 10 minutes.
- In smaller communities out in the country, it will take longer as it is further to the nearest fire station.

#### **How can the emergency services rescue me if I live high up in a building?**

The fire brigade has ladders which reach up to the 8th floor. If you live higher up than this, there are fireproof stairways you should use.

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### **How can I help the emergency services while they do their job?**

- Stay outside the safety zone they set up. This is there to stop you from being hurt.
- The emergency services are trained to rescue people. You can help by giving them information about who lives in the building and describing what the building looks like inside.
- If you know that somebody is still inside a burning building, you must tell members of the emergency services immediately.

Read more at [www.msb.se](http://www.msb.se)

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