

Busting Myths, Saving Lives

Did You Know?

Fire Prevention Week is observed every October in memory of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871; over 250 casualties, left 100,000 homeless, and thousands of buildings destroyed. It was officially established in 1925 to raise awareness about fire safety. **Fire Prevention Week is the longest running public health observance in the U.S.**

In Honor of Fire Prevention Week, Here Are Common Myths About Fires & Smoke Conditions, and What to Do Instead.

MYTH 1: "I can open this window to breathe better."

Truth: Opening a window during a fire can pull in oxygen and feed the flames worsening the condition.

Do this instead: Stay low to avoid smoke, seal the room by blocking cracks with a wet cloth, and signal for help from the window without opening it unless absolutely necessary or instructed by FDNY.

MYTH 2: "Smoke isn't dangerous, it's the flames I need to worry about."

Truth: In most fires, smoke reaches you long before the flames do. Smoke spreads faster than fire and can block visibility or knock you unconscious.

Do this instead: Stay low to the ground where the air is cleaner, cover your mouth and nose with a cloth, and exit quickly and calmly using the stairs.

MYTH 3: "Elevators are faster and safer than stairs in an emergency."

Truth: Elevators can stop on the fire floor, malfunction, or trap you.

Do this instead: Use the stairwell only, unless FDNY instructs otherwise. Stay to one side to allow first responders to pass.

MYTH 4: "If the door isn't hot, it's safe to open."

Truth: A cool door could still lead to thick smoke on the other side.

Do this instead: Open slowly and check for smoke. If you see or smell anything, shut the door immediately, and find another route or stay and seal in.

For Individuals with Disabilities:

Procedures vary by building. If you require evacuation assistance, speak to your Fire Life Safety Director (FLSD) to review your building's approved Emergency Action Plan.

Remember:

Fires move fast. Don't hesitate. Know your routes, join fire drills, and never ignore the alarm. Knowledge saves lives.

