



Curatorial Safety

Fire Evacuation

In accordance with NPS *Management Policies* (2001), all parks are required to have an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). Your park's EOP should be kept up-to-date and include response strategies for all potential emergencies and conditions, as well as current building, staffing, and visitation uses.

An important component of an EOP is an evacuation plan for each building. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends the following guidelines for an effective fire evacuation plan:

1. Have working alarms throughout your building to alert you in case of fire. Be sure to conduct monthly testing and routine scheduled maintenance on your system. If the building utilizes independent "home-type" smoke detectors, test them every month by pushing the test button, and replace the batteries once a year or when the alarm chirps, warning that the battery is low. (If your detectors use electricity, be sure to test any back-up batteries.)
2. Draw a floor plan of your building. You'll need two ways out of every room. One way out would be the door, and the second way out may be a window.
3. Choose an outside meeting place. Make sure it's a safe distance from the building and mark it on the escape plan. Practice having all staff members (and visitors) report immediately to your outside meeting place during fire drills. **Note: Be sure to designate those staff responsible for overseeing visitor evacuation to the meeting place.**
4. Everyone should memorize the local fire department's emergency phone number. Contact the Fire Department from another building or from a cell phone as you exit.
5. After you make your plan, practice it at least twice a year.

Remember: Smoke and heat rise, so during a fire there's cleaner, cooler air near the floor. Always try your second exit if you encounter smoke when escaping from a fire. If you need to go through smoke to get outside, remember to stay in your "safety zone" by crawling on your hands and knees with your head 1 to 2 feet above the floor.

For additional fire safety information, see the NFPA publication *Introduction to Employee Fire and Life Safety*, edited by Guy Colonna (2001). This and other safety materials are available by contacting the NFPA at (617) 770-3000 or visit their website at <http://www.nfpa.org>.