Here’s a shocking statistic: each year about 4,500 schools nationwide experience a fire of some type. About half of these fires were intentionally set, with about a quarter started in trash cans and other rubbish containers; any of them could quickly turn into life-threatening situations.

Students often take fire drills lightly, but it’s critical that everyone knows what to do in a true emergency. New York City Public Schools are required to hold 12 fire drills each year.

Fire safety applies at home, too, of course. Having a family evacuation plan in place can make all the difference.

Let’s get ready and be safe during fire drills and real fire events!

Did you know?

- More than 50% of home fire deaths occur between 10 pm and 6 am, when most people are sleeping.
- Installing and maintaining a smoke alarm reduces the chances of dying in a fire by 50%. By law, every home must have a carbon monoxide detector and smoke alarm installed.
- Fire Prevention Week is observed every year from Sunday through Saturday on the week that includes October 9, the anniversary of the great Chicago fire, which occurred in 1871.

Quick activities to try at home:

- Having an escape plan is critical in the event of a real fire. Use the sketch your child created at school showing two escape routes from each room. Schedule an at-home drill to practice the plan with your family.
- Once your escape plan is in place, discuss any special circumstances in your family. Does a parent work at night? Is there an older adult or young child in the house? Does a family member have physical disabilities that would present extra challenges? Research the best steps to take for each of these circumstances.

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