

Preparing for a household emergency.

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Is your family trained and ready to deal with a household emergency? Discussion is good, but training and practice is a very good idea, especially when children are involved. If kids have some sense of what to do, they will panic much less during an emergency like a fire. Make a rough sketch of the floor plan of your house and identify escape routes from smoke and fire. That will help you to spot areas that may require something like second floor window ladders. If the fire is in the stairway, you may have no other way out! You can now buy window ladders that can be kept near a window and quickly and simply deployed if required without any installation. The one in the second photo just hangs over the window ledge. Organize a place where the family can gather outside and you can count heads. This is critically important. Parents have been seriously injured running into burning houses to try and save kids that were not even in the house but safely at the neighbours. Fire blankets are something you may want to keep in the kitchen. It is very effective at smothering an oil fire, without the likelihood of splashing that you can get with an extinguisher. The blanket is also effective for covering someone who's clothes are on fire. They now come in little wall mounted units that will always be ready rather than hidden in an old drawer. I mentioned portable heaters because they are so often a cause of fire in the winter. Buy ones that have automatic tip protection. They turn off if they fall on their face. If yours doesn't have this safety feature, replace it.

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