

HOW TO SURVIVE A HIGH-RISE HOTEL FIRE

Always treat a hotel fire alarm seriously, and exit following hotel procedure. If the fire is nearby, use the following procedure.

1 Feel your hotel room doorknob with the back of your hand.

If the doorknob is hot to the touch, go to step 2 and then skip to step 5. If it is not hot, follow the steps in order.

2 Partially fill the bathtub with cold water.

Soak towels, washcloths, bedsheets, and blankets in the water. If the water is off, use water from the toilet tank. Put a wet washcloth over your mouth and nose and a wet sheet or towel over your head.

3 Open the door.

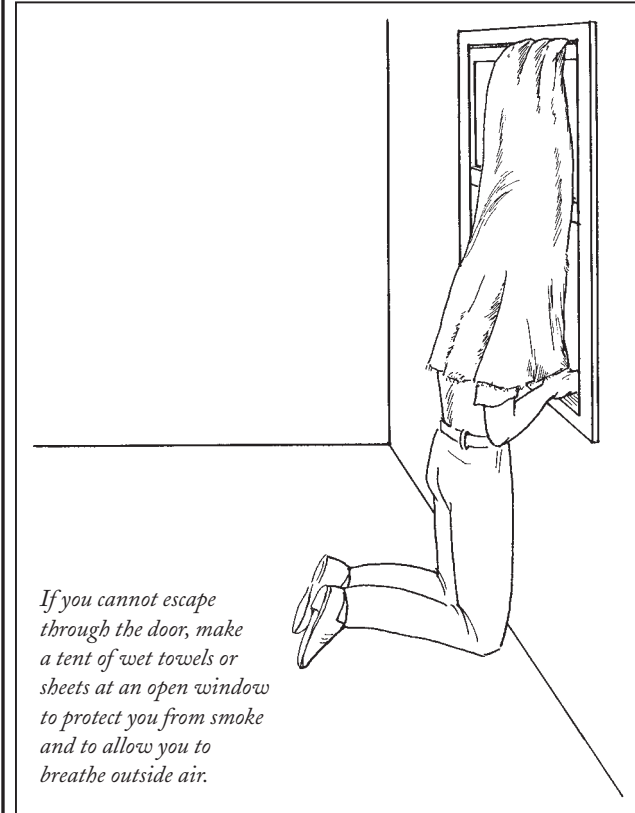
4 If the hallway is smoke-filled, get as low as possible—one to two feet above the floor.

Make your way to an emergency exit. Never use the elevator.

5 If the door or doorknob is hot, do not open the door.

Wedge wet towels in the crack under the door to keep smoke out.

6 Try calling the front desk or rooms on other floors to check on conditions in other areas.



If you cannot escape through the door, make a tent of wet towels or sheets at an open window to protect you from smoke and to allow you to breathe outside air.

7 Turn off fans and air conditioners that could draw smoke into the room, and open the window slightly.

If the fire is on a floor below you, smoke may enter the room through the window, so keep the opening narrow. If the fire is not below you, open the window a third or halfway.

8 Make a tent of wet towels and sheets at the window.

Do not build the tent if smoke is billowing into the room. Hold or attach one side of the towel or sheet to the window and allow the other side to fall behind you, so you are protected from smoke and are breathing outside air. The towels should help to cool the air and make it easier to breathe.

9 Signal rescue personnel with a white towel or a flashlight.

Wait for rescue.

10 If the air in the room is getting worse, breathing becomes difficult, and no rescue is forthcoming, try to kick through the wall into the adjacent room.

Closets are the best locations to try to break through. Sit on the floor of the closet, and knock on the wall until you hear a hollow sound. (Wall studs are normally spaced 16 inches apart.) Use both feet to kick through both surfaces of drywall. You may survive by using this as a breathing hole, or you may need to continue breaching the wall until you can escape into the next room.

11 If you cannot breach the wall, go to a window and look at the outside of the building.

If the rooms have balconies that are close together, consider climbing to another balcony on the same floor. If there are no neighboring balconies, you can tie bedsheets together and climb to a balcony directly beneath yours. Use square knots (the first step in tying your shoes, done twice) and lower yourself one floor only. Consider this option only as a last resort, and only do it if you are attempting to escape an immediate danger or to reach rescue personnel.

Be Aware

- Ladders on fire trucks usually reach only to the seventh floor of a high-rise building. Consider booking a room below this level.
- Poolside or courtyard rooms are likely to be inaccessible to ladder trucks, even if they are below the seventh floor. Consider staying in a streetside room.
- Upon check-in, make sure the hotel has smoke detectors and fire sprinklers.
- Count the doors between your room and the nearest fire exit. This will help you get out safely if smoke reduces visibility.
- Keep your room key where it can be found in the dark.
- Never jump from a height of more than two floors or you risk death.