

Tips to Practice at Home

- Remain calm.
- Crawl to the door on your hands and knees when the smoke alarm goes off.
- Feel the door with the back of your hand. If it's hot, do not open it.
- Put something under the door to keep smoke out.
- Know two means of escape from every room. What is your second way out?
- Yell "Fire!" out the window to call for help.
- Meet at a designated safe place away from the home.
- Call 911 once you are safe outside.
- Stay out once you get out.

Reach Out

See if you can work with your local fire or police station to familiarize your family members with first responders and their equipment. Being more comfortable with their tools and roles will help individuals with special needs be less likely to resist evacuation.

Find out if your area (city, county, or state) or local firehouse has a special needs registry for natural disasters or immediate emergency situations.



147 N. 2nd St. Philadelphia, PA
215-923-1438
firemanshallmuseum.org



For more
information, visit:
phila.gov/fire



Fire Emergency Safety

A Guide for Families
with Special Needs



Choose a Safe Place

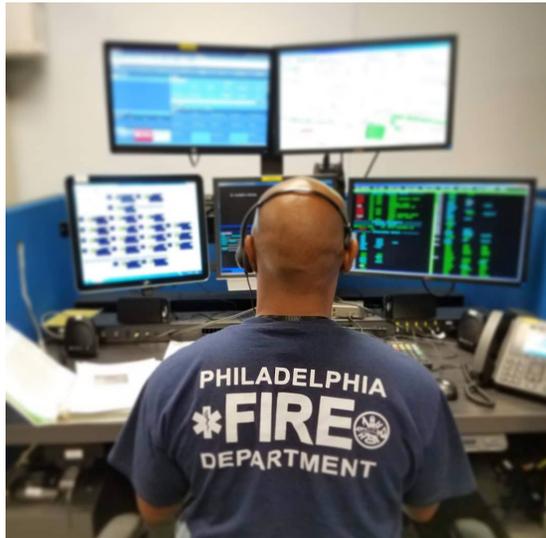
People with special needs will often retreat to a place of comfort during stressful situations. Establish a safe space outside the home they can escape to in case of emergency, such as a neighbor's house around the corner.

- Take into account how your family member responds to strangers or extremely stressful situations when establishing a safe place.



Practice Regularly

If your family member is attached to a particular routine, try to incorporate a home escape plan within their patterns. Practice escaping from multiple locations in the house so they will be able to respond no matter when or where a fire breaks out.



Communicate with Responders

Plan what information to say to first responders if someone in the home with special needs is possibly trapped inside, such as how to act towards them and what to say based on their needs. You should also provide their name, age, gender, exact or possible location, and other potential hazards (i.e. oxygen tanks in home).

- There will always be an Officer in Charge (OIC) on the scene, who will best use any information you give them about your family member.

Create an Alarm

Some people with a sensory-processing disorder will not respond at all to certain stimuli (sound, pain, heat, etc.). If you know this is the case in your home, try to teach a response or create an alternate 'alarm' that will prompt evacuation.

For those who do respond to stimuli, always keep your smoke detector up-to-date to prevent non-emergency beeping.

- You can install lithium-powered smoke alarms, which will last for 10 years! In Philadelphia, residents can call 311 to request free smoke alarms from the Fire Department.

