

# Life Safety Guidelines For Residential High Rise Buildings



# C.A.I.M.



City of Chicago  
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*THE CHICAGO FIRE DEPARTMENT  
"WE'RE THERE WHEN YOU NEED US."*



The Chicago Fire Department works hard to ensure the safety of every resident in Chicago. This brochure will provide basic guidelines to help keep you safe in case of a fire in your building.

The Chicago Fire Department wants you to know that high-rise buildings are among the safest places to live.

### **Did you know?**

- High-rise buildings are constructed with fire resistant materials, making them among the safest types of buildings in the event of a fire.
- National statistics indicate that less than one percent of fire related deaths occur in high-rise buildings.
- High-rise fires are almost always contained to a single room or one apartment.
- Being prepared and taking proper precautions in a fire emergency can help save your life.

### **C.A.L.M.**

When an emergency strikes people tend to panic. Keeping calm in an emergency will lead you to safety because it allows you to think clearly and take action. The Chicago Fire Department has come up with the acronym CALM, which stands for Call, Alert, Listen and Move. Always remember these steps in case of a fire.

#### **C.A.L.M.**

**Call** 911 first

**Alert** building management/security and other tenants

**Listen** for instructions from fire officials

**Move** to safety or evacuate, only if you're in immediate danger

**CALL** 911 first. When you call 911 make sure you provide accurate information such as address, unit or apartment number, and location of the fire or potential emergency.

**ALERT** your building management/security office and other tenants on your floor only after you have called 911. Always provide accurate information about the fire or emergency situation so building management/security can direct the fire department to the emergency once they arrive on the scene.

**LISTEN** to the instructions from fire officials that will be transmitted over the public address system or instructions provided when calling 911 because they may provide you specific instructions on what you should do to stay safe.

**MOVE** to safety or evacuate only if you are in immediate danger, otherwise stay where you are. Depending on the location of the fire, you may be asked to move a couple of floors away from the fire floor but in most high-rise fires staying in place can be the safest option.

The acronym **CALM** was developed to help you remember what to do in a fire situation. When an emergency strikes, every minute counts. Remaining calm and following these general guidelines can help keep you safe.

### ***Be prepared and know what to do in a fire situation***

- Long before a fire strikes, residents should be familiar with the building safety systems such as the floor plan, the location of all exits, and know which safest stairwell you will use in case of an emergency.
- Practice fire safety in your home, know how to evacuate your apartment in case of a fire.
- Keep a flashlight and extra set of house keys easily accessible.
- Make sure you have a working smoke detector. These should be tested once per month.
- Know your neighbors and be aware of anyone with disabilities or special needs who may require special attention from fire personnel.

### ***If a fire occurs in your apartment/unit:***

- Leave immediately and close the door behind you, but do not lock it so fire officials do not have to forcibly enter.
- Exit from the safest stairwell and go down to a safe location. Once you reach a safe location call 911 and provide the dispatcher your address, floor and apartment number. This information will be given to the fire department.
- Do not use elevators. They are not reliable, can lead you to the fire floor and are only to be used by fire department personnel.
- Once you are in the stairwell, move down to a safe location or to the lobby. Do not go upstairs, and never go to the roof because smoke and heat rise and this can complicate fire rescue operations.

### ***If a fire occurs in another apartment***

- Call 911 immediately and provide them with the building address, your apartment number and the location of the fire.
- Alert your building management/security office after you have called 911. Remember they will direct the fire department once they arrive on the scene.
- Listen for important instructions that will instruct you what to do. The fire department recommends that you stay in your apartment unless directed otherwise. Due to fire resistant materials used in construction of high-rise buildings, your apartment is usually the safest place to be. Keep all the doors close and seal them by placing a wet towel at the bottom of your door.
- If conditions worsen in your apartment, call 911 to inform them of your situation and provide them your apartment number so they will know where to find you. If smoke and heat start to build up, open the window slightly but don't break the window. If your window does not open, stay low to the floor.

- If you must leave your apartment, take your house keys and a flashlight with you. Before leaving your apartment, feel the door with the back of your hand to ensure fire conditions outside your apartment are not dangerous. If the door is hot to the touch don't leave, stay in place. If the door is cool to the touch, open the door slightly and if smoke conditions are not dangerous, go to the safest stairwells.

**Remember the three don'ts:**

**Don't** go to the roof

**Don't** use elevators

**Don't** break windows

These are general guidelines to consider if a fire strikes in your building. Please remember that no two fires are alike, all fires behave differently, and each may require a different response. Being prepared, remaining calm, and knowing what to do in a fire situation can help save your life.

**Fire and life safety preparedness:**

As part of the Chicago Fire Department's ongoing commitment to keep you safe, we provide free fire and life safety preparedness presentations and educational drills for all high-rise buildings.

If you would like us to conduct a Residential High-Rise Life Safety presentation at your next building management or association meeting, please contact the our Public Education Unit at (312) 747-6691. To find out more about other free public education programs currently provided, visit us on-line at [www.cityofchicago.org/fire](http://www.cityofchicago.org/fire).



For more information contact the Chicago Fire Department's Public Education Unit at 1010 S. Clinton St., Chicago, IL 60607 or call (312) 747-6691.