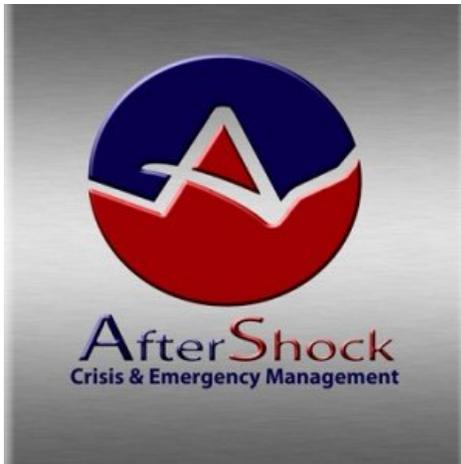


# Fires In High Rise Structures – The Bad, The UGLY!

## (Part Two)



Picking up right where we left off a few days back and hoping that you all took it to heart, let's continue reading what [Ryan Alles](#), President of [High Rise Escape Systems](#), has to say about how YOU can be safer, **wherever** you are!

### Ryan Alles:

Whether in a multi-story building or not, here are some fire safety tips that I would like to share with you:

- Clean your dryer vent out each time you start a new load. If you haven't pulled it away from the wall within the last year to pull the extra lint out of the hose connection or if you need to add more time to any load because it's still damp, then its definitely time to clean it out. It may seem inconvenient but I'll bet it takes you less than 5 minutes *and* makes you sleep better at night!
- NEVER store flammable liquids or products near your water heater (paint cans, beach chairs, cleaning products, etc). I understand that closet space is a big deal in condos but safety is more important. Store these flammable containers under the sink or on the tops of closets (this is a better option if you have young children) is a better place.

After a rash of high rise fires in my hometown at Cocoa Beach, Florida I was invited to speak to their City Council on [Supplemental Evacuation](#). Chief G.C. Wine IV approached me afterward and shared a story of a fire on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor that quickly got out of hand, solely because of paint and other combustibles being stored in a hot water heater closet when the hot water heater overheated.

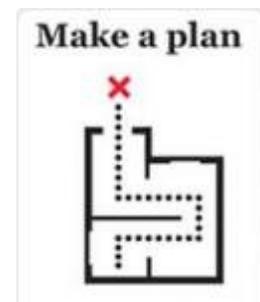
Just to stress my point of planning two ways out, Chief Wine also mentioned that when his firefighters got the ladder truck up to the 7<sup>th</sup> floor, they were greeted by a dozen people in “[hover-rounds](#)” (battery-operated wheelchairs) that were screaming to **get them outta there!** Now, who is going



to put out the fire when his resources are suddenly committed to rescue? Not to mention, this is just the 7<sup>th</sup> floor, 2 floors **below the fire floor!**

**Make a plan:** Take 20 minutes to regularly practice your planned, effective escape routes - especially if you have kids - and never, ever count on the elevator! One of the most important reasons elevators should never be considered as an escape route is referred to as “**Phase 1 recall**”. It ends up being a trap since the area where you would wait for an elevator on any given floor is referred to as the “elevator lobby” and usually houses a smoke detector. What happens is this: If on ANY floor, the detector goes into alarm mode, ALL the elevators will descend to the ground level to wait for the Fire Department. Always take the stairs first if it is possible and practice it together with your family.

Time your planned escape routes to see how well your family can handle the physical requirements under non-stressful conditions when no one else is descending. Next, find a place to meet a safe distance away from the building in case you and your family members become separated. If you have young children, make sure they have a list of emergency contact names and numbers (besides you) to call on their person that is preferably someone who DOES NOT live in your building.



The kids will have fun practicing this with you but you will sleep better tonight, knowing that your children will always be safe. Every time I go out with my children, I give each of them my business card to hand to someone if they're lost. It has all of my contact information on it and is a practical way that's very handy when we find ourselves in a public place where we might become separated.



**Don't leave candles unattended:** I know you've heard this a million times but think about where you're setting them. Don't put them on an end-table under your lampshade, near drapes or in the bathroom next to any towels. If you place them under cabinets on the kitchen counter occasionally, feel the cabinet where the column of heat rises and see how warm it gets. It gets pretty hot, right? That means this obviously isn't the best place to set a lit candle.

**Never grill on a condo balcony or under a porch** where the smoke will follow the awning up into your home.

**Never deep-fry a frozen turkey (or anything for that matter)** and never do it INSIDE of your home. I don't cook much so this was something I was happy to learn from others. Look it up on YouTube sometime and you will know exactly what I mean!

**Never put water on a stove fire:** Turn the burner off, move the pot off of the burner if you can, get a towel large enough to cover the pot, get it damp and gently toss it over to cover the entire pot if you can. This puts the fire out by taking away its oxygen and not

cooling it below its fire point. Leave it there and call for help just in case to make sure the fire didn't extend into the cabinets above. Take a look at this great clip to see how it's done:

<http://youtu.be/MUyXJ9U6syc>

There you have it folks! Fire [safety statistics](#), real life experiences of a fire fighter and safety precautions you can take to prevent and survive home fires! If this does not shake you enough to make you think twice about taking care of those dormant [fire hazards](#) within your surroundings I don't know what will!

Another thing you can do if you live or work in a high rise is talk to your facilities or building management about [upgrading their fire fighting and life safety equipment](#). Find out if there is an evacuation plan for the building and have them post these evacuation plans on each floor and if that floor is too large and has more than one elevator or stairwell, then multiple plans need to be posted in each wing of that floor so everyone has easy visible access to them.

This still is not enough! Emergency plans, [evacuation equipment](#), fire fighting and life safety equipment is only AS GOOD as the person USING the equipment is in **knowing how to do so**. You can't do much with a fire extinguisher if you don't know how to operate it the right way. You can't use that first aid kit to administer emergency first aid for burn injuries if you have no idea how to do so. You don't know how long it will take you and your family to get out of the 8th floor of a burning building if you've never tried to do so when the building is still in one piece. What you CAN do is take the first step by learning *how* to prepare yourself for potential fire hazards by participating in life-saving [emergency trainings!](#)

Having your apartment or office inside a high rise [surveyed](#) by an Insurance Agent is also not a bad idea, he can help you get the right property covered under the right policies.

A good facility manager will think of these issues pro-actively and involve its' occupants in emergency planning, along with preparedness, the same way a parent will keep vigilant over their children or a top manager will be safety-conscious over their employees. The reason there will always be someone on the lookout for others who are important to them, whether it's a loved one, tenant or co-worker, is so that when time comes, everyone is ready to do what they should; fight the disaster, beat it and recover from it in one piece and as quickly as possible!



**Stay Well - Stay SAFE!**

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**With Special Thanks to:**

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