



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA FIRE DEPARTMENT

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SECURITY BARS AND FIRE SAFETY **10/22/07**

Fire safety needs to be considered when planning to install security devices in your home. It is dangerous to install security bars on windows without consideration for escape during a fire. Due to the fear of crime, some Philadelphians are taking measures to secure their homes against illegal entry. Unfortunately, these security actions are often taken without consideration for life safety in the event of a fire. Security bars and double-keyed dead bolts installed without knowledge of their effects during a fire have too often resulted in occupants being trapped inside a burning home, and have also delayed the rescue efforts of firefighters.

Rooms used for sleeping below the fourth floor in a one- or two-family residence, apartment building, hotel or personal care home are required, by the Philadelphia Fire Code, to have at least one window that can serve as an Emergency Escape Window, unless the room has access to two exits or the building is sprinklered. The emergency escape window should open easily, be wide enough to allow escape, and may only have security bars if they are equipped with a quick-release latch that can be easily opened in darkness without a key, special knowledge, or excessive force (see page 2). In addition, doors locked on the inside should be capable of being opened easily without having to insert a key into the lock (a thumb latch is acceptable) or require special knowledge or excessive force to open the door (see page 3).

Every household should have a smoke detector on each floor and a fire evacuation plan that includes alerting occupants, evacuation to a pre-determined location outside and calling the Fire Department.

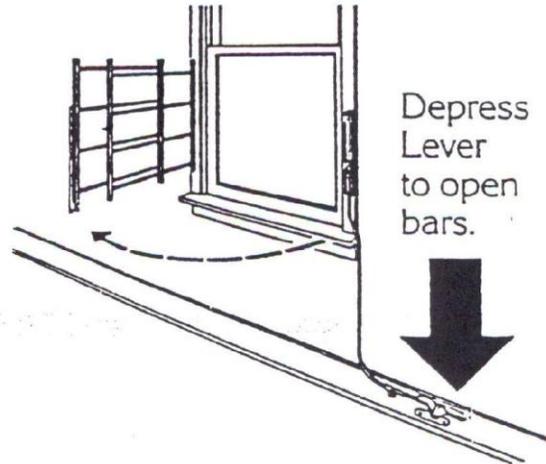
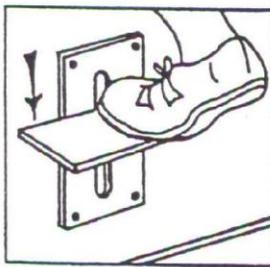
IF A FIRE STARTED IN YOUR HOME, WOULD YOUR FAMILY KNOW HOW TO ESCAPE?

Follow these simple rules in planning escape routes:

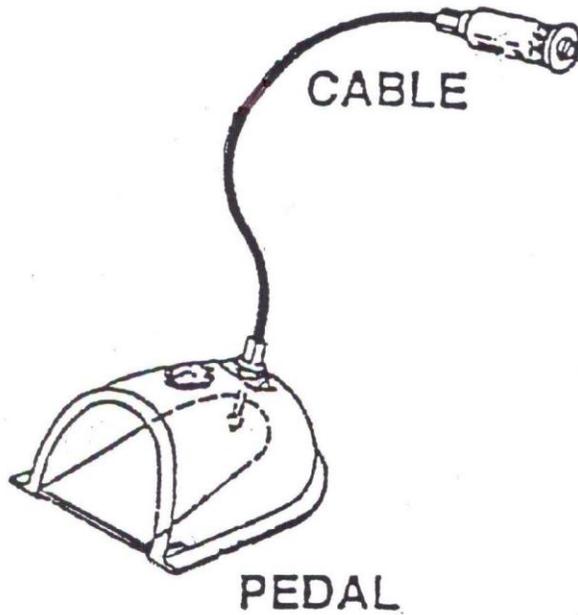
1. Identify emergency exits.
2. Make sure everyone in your household can operate locked or barred windows and doors.
3. Where bedroom windows have security bars, make certain that the bars on at least one window open from the inside by a quick release device.
4. Hold home fire drills (twice annually is recommended) to ensure everyone in your household knows how to escape during a fire.

SECURITY BARS ON WINDOWS IN SLEEPING ROOMS BARS ON ONE WINDOW MUST RELEASE FROM THE INSIDE

Examples of approved types of locking-release mechanisms for security bars on windows are illustrated below:

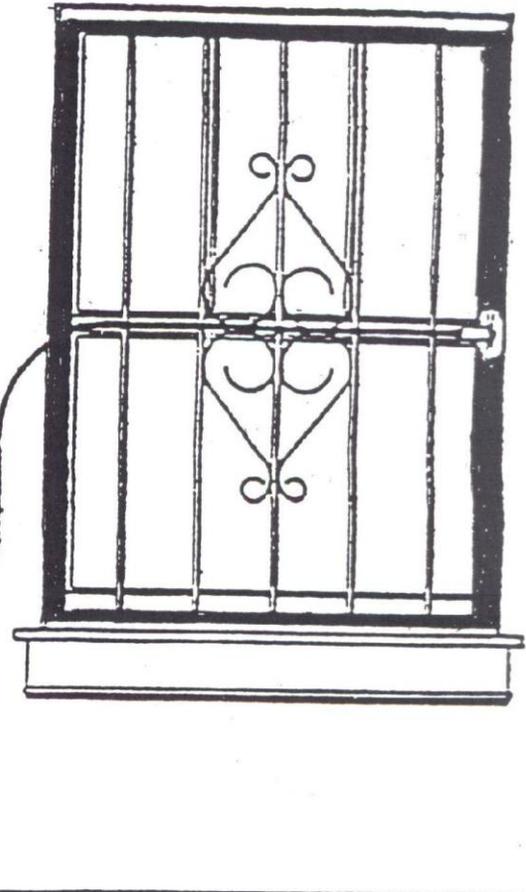


Depress
Lever
to open
bars.



CABLE

PEDAL



DOOR LOCKS NOT PERMITTED



DOOR LOCKS PERMITTED

