

Safe and Sound

Advice on safety at home and in the community

Kia **Haumaru** kia **Toiora**



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Introduction

Despite the impression sometimes given in the media, older people are no more at risk of crime than anyone else.

In fact, as measured by the New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey 2006, people over 60 are at very low risk of being victims of crime compared to other groups.

Neither are older people more anxious about crime. The Social Report 2008 says that of all age groups, people over 60 are the least likely to say that fear of crime has an impact on their quality of life.

Older people are also keen contributors to community safety. Neighbourhood Support New Zealand says that older people make up the majority of volunteers for Neighbourhood Support, Community Patrols and the Police.

In the Christchurch earthquakes the mutual support provided in the community has been heartening and older people are both helpers and helped.

Age Concern wants this status quo to be maintained. To do this people need up to date information and advice about what they can do to maintain safety both at home and in the community. This booklet is designed either as a stand alone resource, or to accompany Age Concern talks and seminars about home and community safety.

The information has been provided by a variety of community and government agencies that work to promote safety including Age Concerns, Neighbourhood Support New Zealand, New Zealand Police, New Zealand Fire Service, and Civil Defence Emergency Management.



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www.ageconcern.org.nz

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Age Concern in your community

Age Concern is your first port of call when you and your family/whānau need information, advice, referral and support.

We know what the local community can offer you and we can help you make the links. We can tell you what's happening in the community centre; how to get home support; where to find your nearest Tai Chi class...

Our activities are varied, interesting and fun, and most have a strong social element to them.

Through our talks, seminars and resources we aim to provide useful information, advice and contacts.

Age Concern's Accredited Visiting Service supports people to develop new friendships and keep connected to the community.

And we can go further: we can provide personal support when you need it to help with a range of problems.

Volunteer with Age Concern and make a difference



Elder abuse and neglect prevention

One of the safety concerns that Age Concern aims to address is elder abuse and neglect.

As many as one in ten older people face abuse and neglect problems. If this is happening to someone you know, your encouragement and support may be the key to helping them be happy, healthy and safe.

Age Concern works with older people and their family, whānau and carers so that they can receive the information, support and advocacy they need to stop elder abuse. For more detailed

information about elder abuse and neglect, contact your nearest Age Concern or visit the Age Concern New Zealand web site

You can also help stop other kinds of family violence.

Look up www.areyouok.org.nz for lots of information and ideas on how you can help, or call the Family Violence Information Line on 0800 456 450.

And lastly Age Concern needs your help: volunteer with Age Concern and make a difference.

Contact your local Age Concern or visit www.ageconcern.org.nz.

Age Concern Life Tubes

A Life Tube can speak for you when you can't.

A Life Tube is a container for vital health information that emergency services can use in case of an accident or sudden illness.

**Vital contact
or medical
information is
available inside
your fridge**

Life Tubes contain a form you can use to record medical conditions, medications, doctor, next of kin, and contact numbers to be used by emergency services coming to your aid in a medical or civil emergency. The red sticker provided should be placed on the outside of the fridge.

Then container is kept inside your refrigerator. In an event when emergency services (POLICE, AMBULANCE or FIRE SERVICES) are called to your home, the red label alerts them to the fact that vital contact or medical information is available inside your fridge.

Information is also available to a neighbour or any other person who may find you in difficulty.

Life Tubes are available at a very modest cost from your local Age Concern.

Please note: the main distributor for larger orders for retirement villages and other seniors' groups is Age Concern Hastings – phone 06 870 90 60 or email office.ageconhast@xtra.co.nz.



Neighbourhood Support

The most important thing you can do to keep your home safer is to get to know your neighbours.

Research by the New Zealand Police (2010) confirms it.

Streets that have an active Neighbourhood Support Group have less crime in the street than those streets that don't have Neighbourhood Support.

Neighbourhood Support is not just about crime. In conjunction with Police, Fire Service, Age Concern, Civil Defence and your local Council, Neighbourhood Support is concerned about all aspects of community safety.

Neighbourhood Support Groups

- Help foster a sense of community spirit, where everyone is respected and valued
- Share information, ideas and insights to minimise the opportunities for crime to occur and to improve safety for families/whānau and their neighbours
- Alert neighbours to any criminal activity in their neighbourhood
- Help prevent burglaries and car crime by keeping on eye on neighbours' properties in their absence
- Assist the Police by reporting any suspicious persons or vehicles in the area
- Assist neighbours in times of need or emergency
- Identify local crime and safety problems, and with the help of each other and the many organisations Neighbourhood Support is linked to, resolve them



- Help neighbours to feel more confident and secure.

Take ownership of your neighbourhood and help make it a safer and friendlier place in which to live. Setting up a neighbourhood Support group is easy and it costs nothing for people to belong.

Neighbourhood Support can provide your group with a street sign for the area and stickers to indicate that your house is a member of Neighbourhood Support.

The Neighbourhood Support website is www.ns.org.nz. This site contains helpful crime and safety information including a series of topics of special interest to older people.



Crime prevention advice from the New Zealand Police

Taking sensible precautions, and knowing what to do in an emergency, can help you avoid being a victim of crime and to live more confidently.

This section provides some crime prevention advice. Your local Community Constable, Neighbourhood Support and the *Safety tips* section of the Police website, www.police.govt.nz, are good sources of more detailed information.



Contacting the Police

Never feel you cannot contact the Police. It is important to report all crime to them regardless of you not wanting to bother them. Reporting what you have seen or what has happened to you may help police solve a crime.

Community Constables from time to time carry out other duties, so if yours is not available when you contact them, contact the Police station regarding your enquiry.

You should call 111 when you need immediate help with a life threatening or time critical emergency. If you are ever genuinely in doubt about whether to call 111, Police would prefer you did.

Burglar alarms

A burglar alarm is a good deterrent. Homes are less likely to be broken into if they have a professionally fitted alarm system.

An alarm is only part of good security. Physical protection, including security locks and lighting, and 'good housekeeping' also contribute to making your property unattractive to thieves.

Doors and windows

Fit rim and / or mortise locks or bolts to all external doors and locks to all downstairs or easily accessible windows; use a 'deadlock' on the front door. Use mortise security bolts or key operated door security press bolts on the top and bottom of both solid wood and glazed back doors.

Security lighting

Security lighting welcomes visitors and deters burglars. A simple plug-in timer could be enough to put off an opportunist criminal from burgling your home. If your property is lit, the burglar will usually look elsewhere.

Before you go on holiday

- Ask New Zealand Post to hold your mail (FREE for senior citizens)
- Cut the lawns and tidy the garden
- Ask your family/whānau or a reliable neighbour to keep an eye on your property. Ask them to collect free papers and circulars and open and close curtains
- Use a plug-in timer to turn lights and a radio on and off
- If you aren't taking the car, leave it secure on the drive. If you are taking your car, ask a neighbour to park their car on your drive
- Cancel the newspapers and milk
- Authorise someone to carry out repairs should the worst happen.

Your vehicle

To some thieves, taking your car or stealing from it is just a game; they have no conscience and no concept of the devastation they leave behind including inconvenience and the loss of your no claim insurance premium discount.

Simple precautions will prevent many of these crimes.

Common items stolen from vehicles are:

- Stereos, or CD players, or MP3 players
- Mobile phones
- GPS devices
- Handbags and briefcases
- Laptop computers
- Credit cards or money
- Vehicle documents.

Electronic and physical immobilisers

Electronic immobilisers are used to prevent a car from being stolen. They are wired into the vehicle's electrical system and require a coded key or transponder to switch the device off.

Physical devices include steering wheel locks and gearbox immobilisers. Always fit these devices, even when leaving your vehicle for just a few minutes.

Vehicle Security Guidelines

- When you leave your car, keep all the doors locked and windows closed. Some thieves will break windows but others will only steal from vehicles that are unlocked
- Security mark or label vehicle accessories. If possible remove them when the vehicle is unattended, or fit a security device to prevent their theft
- Never leave possessions in your vehicle. If you must, lock possessions out of sight in the boot. Always take personal correspondence, cash, and credit or debit cards with you
- Remember to always remove the ignition key when you park, even if your car is on the drive or when you are filling up with fuel at a service station
- When parking away from home, try to use a supervised car park. Ensure the area is well lit and access is safe, especially if you are returning to your vehicle in darkness.

Bogus callers

Bogus callers use false or misleading information to gain entry to homes or to obtain work.

Bogus callers can appear to be very believable. They can take on many guises, dressing as utility workers, tradespeople, or even Police officers. They are persuasive and articulate and can be persistent and intimidating.

The type of things they will say to try and get into your home might include:

- I need to check the water / turn the water off / water main has burst
- There has been a power problem up the road
- I've lost my football / puppy / cat
- Can I have a glass of water?
- Can I see John / Jane? (or any other fictitious name)
- I'm interested in buying antiques or books

- I can trim those trees for you to stop you from getting a Council fine
- I'd like to demonstrate a vacuum cleaner / paint your roof etc.

Remember:

- Try not to keep lots of cash in the house and keep things like your wallet, savings book, cheque book and bank cards well hidden
- Most utilities and service staff will make an appointment prior to coming to your house and should not turn up unannounced. They should also have a sign-written vehicle and identification card
- If someone unexpected who you do not know comes to your house, do not let them in until you are absolutely sure they are genuine
- Always report bogus caller crime to the police.

If you have any doubts - Keep them Out
- Call the police DIAL 111



Intentional Damage to Property

Intentional damage is when someone intentionally or recklessly destroys or damages property belonging to someone else.

Arson, graffiti, damage to vehicles, damage to your property or damage to Council property such as bus shelters, parks and play areas are all examples of intentional damage.

Always report graffiti or other criminal damage to the police.

Pushy sales people

You may have been called by telemarketers asking you to switch power or phone providers. Pushy door-to-door sales people are still walking the streets too. Here are things you can do if they go too far.



The information below has been provided by Consumer NZ.

Switching energy companies

It's good to check that your electricity and/or gas supplier is still giving you the best deal. Sales consultants can promise big savings, but check they aren't the result of a short-term deal that will soon leave you worse off. Ask if they have price rises planned. Some companies use outside marketers, who can be too keen to get their commission.

Websites like Powerswitch can give you full and impartial information.

Usually you will be asked to look at an old bill so you can compare tariffs etc. But don't tell them the unique ICP (Installation Control Point) number on it. This is the key - don't give this out if you don't want to be switched! You can ask to receive more information through the mail before you decide.

Of course, if you are happy to swap providers over the phone, then go for it! But don't give financial details out over the phone.

It's good to check you're getting the best deal, but some marketers can be too keen.

The change-over

This should be seamless and done by the electricity companies. You shouldn't have to do anything.

Sometimes your old/existing company will contact you to confirm that you do want to switch, and sometimes even offer you money or benefits to stay with them. You can accept and call off the switch – your old company will liaise with the new company.

Your original company doesn't have to contact you, but they must work with the new company - and switch you within 23 business days of the first notification (new legislation reduces this timeframe considerably). Then it should all go ahead smoothly.

See the Electricity Commission's Electricity Governance rules and Powerswitch, the free website for price comparisons.

The Office of the Electricity and Gas Complaints Commissioner

If you are not happy with the way you have been switched to the new provider (or the actions of your old company); you should make a complaint to the relevant company. If you're still not happy with their response, contact the Electricity and Gas Complaints Commission on Freephone: 0800 22 33 40.

Switching telephone companies over the phone

Sales people may convince you to change your phone, national toll call provider, international toll provider, internet provider, or the lot. Believe it or not, there are no rules or regulations!

So, if you think you've been pushed into a bad deal –

- complain to the company you have been switched over to if you haven't agreed - for example, you asked them to send some information to you before you decided.
- complain to the company you were switched from.

If you feel you were misled about the prices or terms of your contract with the company, then you should complain to the company, making sure that it is logged as a complaint. If this was done in a deliberately misleading way, you can contact the Commerce Commission on 0800 943 600 or www.comcom.govt.nz

Some telephone companies are members of the free Telecommunication Dispute Resolution (TDR) service. TDR is a free and independent service to help work out disputes. Call 0508 98 98 98.



Service provider contact details

Contact details for the major telecommunications service providers:

Callplus

Phone: 0800 CALLPLUS (22 55 75)

Orcon

Business: 0800 19 19 19

Residential: 0800 13 14 15

Slingshot

0800 89 2000

Telecom Residential

123 or 0800 225 598

Mobile: *123 or 0800 800 123

TelstraClear

Residential: 0508 888 800

2degrees Mobile

0800 022 022

Vodafone

Fixed line/broadband:

Business: 0800 438 458

Residential: 0800 438 448

Mobile: 777 from your mobile,
or 0800 800 021

Woosh

Auckland: 09 940 0111 Press 1

Wellington: 04 907 0058

Southland: 03 218 6274

Rest of the country: 0800 4 96674

List courtesy of TUANZ.

Fire Prevention

Try our fire prevention quiz

Read the following scenarios and choose the action that you think is most likely to prevent a fire.



1. You have a pan of hot oil heating on the stove. The doorbell rings and you have to spend five minutes at the front door talking to someone selling raffle tickets. When you walk back into the kitchen you find the pan on fire with flames reaching one meter high.

Do you...

- a) Go as fast as you can to the laundry. Fill a bucket with water, go back to the kitchen and throw it over the flames.
- b) Walk over to the stove. Take either the lid of the pan or an oven tray and holding it in front of and below the flames gently slide it onto the pan trapping the flames underneath. Switch off the stove at the mains and leave the house shutting all the doors. Ring the fire brigade from a neighbour's house.
- c) Using a tea towel or other handy cloth carefully pick up the pan by its handle. Holding it well away from you carry it to the back door. Open the door and throw the pan and its contents onto the back lawn.
- d) Immediately leave the kitchen by the door you have entered. Close the door behind you. Leave the house. Close the door behind you and go to a neighbour's and ask them to call 111. Stay outside your house and wait for the fire brigade to arrive.

2. The cord from your kettle has become more frayed recently and you can now clearly see the coloured wires inside. One of the wires appears to have a nick on it and you think you can see the bare wire inside.

- a) The supermarket sells insulating tape quite cheaply. Buy a roll and tightly bind up the frayed part of the cord. Make sure you use black tape.
- b) Take the kettle to a registered electrician and arrange for him to repair the damage. Make sure he does not take too long.
- c) Throw the entire kettle and cord into the rubbish bin after cutting the cord right through to prevent anyone from using it. Buy a new kettle.

Your local fire station can visit you at home to provide help with installing smoke alarms, checking existing alarms/putting in new batteries, and helping you make an escape plan. Just give your local Fire Service a call.

3. It has been a long, cold winter and the weather has been awful. Washing will not dry on the clothesline. Even with your coat on over your clothes you find the lounge is cold and your hands and feet icy when you sit in your armchair.

- a) Drape your washing over the heater turning it regularly to make sure it does not scorch
- b) Have the heater up really close to your chair so you can keep your hands and feet toasty warm
- c) Buy a new heating appliance that keeps the entire room at 18 degrees or higher. Ensure nothing, including yourself, is placed closer than a meter away from it.

4. The newspapers and the television news have been full of stories about home invasion. You want to make your home as safe as possible.

- a) You can never have enough locks. You have Tower bolts, deadlocks and Yale-type locks installed on both of your doors. You hide the deadlock keys in the kitchen drawer to doubly ensure no-one can enter.
- b) You only ever use the front door. You have someone nail the back door shut so nobody can ever get in that way.
- c) You ensure the deadlocks on the front and back doors have the keys left in the inside at night time. You make sure you can walk to either door in the dark without falling over obstructions and can open the locks without light. You do not open the door to strangers until sure of their identity.

5. You have gone into the bedroom to go to bed and found the electric blanket to be smouldering. You unplug it at the wall.

- a) There's no real damage done. You re-make the bed after stripping off the electric blanket and tidily put it under the bed to get rid of tomorrow.
- b) There's a bit of a smoke smell. You leave the bed as it is and go into the spare room where you spend the night.
- c) You call 111 and ask for the Fire Service. You then strip off the electric blanket and put it in the bath covering it with water or place it outside well away from the house or anything flammable.



Photo by Gabriel Angemi

6. You are in bed and hear the smoke alarm sounding somewhere in the house.
- a) Ignore it, the damned thing always goes off by mistake. You'll check it in the morning.
 - b) Pick up the phone by your bed and call 111. Wait until you hear the fire engine arrive.
 - c) Climb out of the window. Go to your friend's house in the next block. Wake her and ask her to ring the fire brigade.
 - d) Go as fast as you can to check what is going on.
 - e) Touch the door. If it is hot do not open it. If it is cool, bend as low as you can and open the door a crack. If there is smoke, close it. You will have to leave by the window. If there is no smoke go through the door and check. If you find any sign of a fire, call to others that there is a fire and leave by the nearest exit. Follow your escape plan. Go to the meeting place unless alone in the house. Go to neighbours and call 111. Do not go back to the house in any circumstances.

Are you fire-safe?

Answers are available on Page 23.



Remember:

Fire is fast – smoke kills

- **Have working smoke alarms**
- **Have an escape plan**
- **Never go back**

Civil Defence Emergency Management

Disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, floods and storms can strike at any time, sometimes without warning. All disasters have the potential to cause disruption, damage property and take lives.

Get ready now to protect yourself, your family, home, business and community.

How to get ready

Learn about the disasters that can affect you and your community. (Visit the civil defence emergency management office at your nearest council or www.getthru.govt.nz for information)

- Create and practice a household emergency plan
- Assemble and maintain emergency survival items
- Have a getaway kit in case you have to leave in a hurry.

Household emergency plan

Many disasters will affect essential services and possibly disrupt your ability to travel or communicate with your family and friends. This is when you will be most vulnerable.

- Plan to look after yourself and your loved ones for at least 3 days or more.
- Get your family/whānau or household together and agree on a plan. You should work out:
 - What you will each do in the event of disasters such as an earthquake, tsunami, flood, storm or volcanic eruption
 - How and where you will meet up during and after a disaster

- The best place to store Emergency Survival Items and know who is responsible for checking essential items
- What you will need to have in your Getaway Kit and where you will keep it
- How to turn off the water, gas and electricity in your home or business
- Who to contact during an emergency.

Plan to recover after a disaster

Make sure your insurance cover is adequate and up to date and that important documents can easily be gathered if you have to evacuate.





Getaway Kits

In some emergencies you may need to evacuate in a hurry. Everyone should have a packed getaway kit in an easily accessible place at home and at work which includes:

- Torch and radio with spare batteries
- Any special needs such as hearing aids and spare batteries, glasses or mobility aids
- Emergency water and easy-to-carry food rations such as energy bars and dried foods in case there are delays in reaching a welfare centre or a place where you might find support. If you have any special dietary requirements, ensure you have extra supplies
- First aid kit and essential medicines
- Essential items for infants or young children such as formula and food, nappies and a favourite toy
- Change of clothes (wind/waterproof clothing and strong outdoor shoes)
- Toiletries – towel, soap, toothbrush, sanitary items, toilet paper
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Face and dust masks
- Pet supplies.

Include important documents in your kit: identification (birth and marriage certificates, driver's licences and passports), financial documents (e.g. insurance policies and mortgage information), and precious family photos.

First Aid

If someone you care for is injured in a disaster, your knowledge of first aid will be invaluable. Many organisations provide first aid training courses. Consider taking a first aid course, followed by regular refresher sessions. You can buy ready-made first aid kits or make up your own. A list of the minimum recommended items for first aid kits can be downloaded from www.getthru.govt.nz.



Evacuation

If you are in an area that is being evacuated listen to your local radio stations as emergency management officials will be broadcasting the most appropriate advice for your community and situation.

People with disabilities or special requirements

If you, or a member of your household or community has a disability or any special requirement that may affect the ability to cope in a disaster, make arrangements now to get the support needed.

Build a Personal Support Network:

- Organise a personal support network of a minimum of three people to alert you to civil defence warnings, or to help if you need to be evacuated. This could be family/whānau members, carers, friends, neighbours or co-workers.
- Ensure you have an emergency plan before a disaster happens and practice it with your support network. Plan for various disasters and situations you could encounter.
- Discuss your needs with the support network and make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary equipment.
- Inform your support team if you are travelling or away from home.

Consider also

- Ensuring you have emergency survival items, including any specialised items you need, and a getaway kit in case of evacuation.
- Keeping at least seven days' supply of your essential medications and make provisions for those that require refrigeration.
- Wearing a medical alert tag or bracelet to identify your disability or health condition.



- When travelling, let a hotel or motel manager know of your requirements in case of an emergency.
- Knowing where to go for assistance if you are dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment.

Hearing impairment

Radio and television stations will broadcast civil defence information and advice before and during a disaster. Ask your support network to alert you to warnings and keep you informed. Contact the emergency management staff at your local council to find out what local warning systems are in place in your community.

Consider installing a system appropriate to your needs such as an alarm with flashing strobe lights to get your attention. Replace the batteries once a year. You may want to consider giving a key to a neighbour so they can alert you to a warning. Keep a writing pad and pencils and a torch in your getaway kit so you can communicate with others.

Sight impairment

People who are blind or partially sighted may have to depend on others if they have to evacuate or go to an unfamiliar Civil Defence Centre.

If you have a guide dog, make sure you have a getaway kit for your dog with food, medications, vaccination records, identification and harnesses to take with you. Keep extra canes at home and in the workplace even if you use a guide dog. Be aware that animals may become confused or disoriented in an emergency.

Trained service animals will be allowed to stay in emergency shelters with their owners. Check with your local council for more information.

Photo by Ann Devereaux



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Physical disability or mobility impairment

If you or someone you are caring for has a physical disability or difficulty with mobility, include mobility aids in the emergency getaway kit. This will help in the event of an evacuation.

In a major earthquake the ground-shaking will make it difficult or impossible for you to move any distance.

If you cannot safely get under a table, move near an inside wall of the building away from windows and tall items that can fall on you, and cover your head and neck as best you can. Lock your wheels if you are in a wheelchair. In bed, pull the sheets and blankets over you and use your pillow to protect your head and neck.

Asthma and respiratory problems

People with asthma or a respiratory disorder will be more susceptible to dust, volcanic ash, or the stress of an emergency.

Make sure you have dust masks at home and in your emergency getaway kit and sufficient medicines for at least seven days.

Special food requirements

If you, or someone you are caring for, have special dietary needs, make sure there is sufficient stock of these food items for at least seven days at home, and in the emergency getaway kit. If you have to be evacuated, emergency shelters are unlikely to have the special food items you may need.



Pets and livestock

If you have pets, domestic animals or livestock, include them in your emergency planning.

Storing water

Household water supplies, including drinking water, could be affected in a disaster so having a supply of stored water is absolutely essential. You need at least three litres of drinking water for each person each day. You will also need water for washing and cooking.

Who to contact

The primary responsibility for civil defence emergency management (CDEM) at a local level rests with your local council. Local and regional councils work with emergency services (Police, Fire, Ambulance) and other relevant agencies to plan for, and respond to

disaster events. CDEM Groups are the consortium of local councils and agencies in each region and they have a responsibility to plan for, and manage regional hazards and risks.

Contact the Civil Defence Emergency Management office at your nearest local council for information on local hazards and community response arrangements.

During a disaster event telephone lines need to be kept clear for emergency calls to get through so please avoid making calls unless absolutely urgent.

If life or property is threatened always dial 111 for Police, Fire or Ambulance.

For other problems such as flooding, water, sewerage, slips, or dangerous buildings, please phone your local council.

Radio stations to listen to

The following radio networks work collaboratively with Civil Defence Emergency Management authorities to broadcast important information and advice in an emergency.

- National Radio
- Newstalk ZB
- Classic Hits
- More FM
- Radio Live.

Write the radio frequency bands for your local stations in your Emergency Plan.

Local contact information

Emergency: call 111

Age Concern's location and telephone number

.....

Neighbourhood Support local Coordinator's name and telephone number

.....

.....

Local Police Station location and telephone number

.....

.....

Community Constable's name and telephone number

.....

.....

Nearest Civil Defence shelter location (Check with Civil Defence)

.....

.....

Local Civil Defence Emergency Management office telephone number
(Check with Civil Defence)

.....

Local council telephone number for problems such as flooding, sewerage,
slips and dangerous buildings

.....

.....

Notes

Answers

Fire prevention quiz, page 13 - 15.

1. There may be two courses of action for this scenario. Answer **(b)** is correct if the fire is not yet out of control, **(d)** is correct if you cannot fight the fire.
2. **(c)**
3. **(c)**
4. **(c)**
5. **(c)**
6. **(e)**

