

New Virtual Reality Experience Tests Users' Fire Safety Skills

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WASHINGTON -- In partnership with Meta, FEMA's Ready Campaign, the Ad Council and the U.S. Fire Administration co-launched a new virtual reality experience promoting fire safety awareness.

In "The Escape Plan," users must work through various obstacles to make a timely escape from an apartment building fire. The free virtual reality experience lets users practice their fire escape skills on their own time and in a safe, controlled environment and can be used with virtual reality equipment. At the end of the experience, users can create their own fire escape plan and visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) and [Listo.gov](https://www.listo.gov) in Spanish language to further prepare for home fires and other hazards.

While virtual reality equipment is recommended, but not required, a desktop version of "[The Escape Plan](#)" allows users to participate in the experience and practice fire safety anywhere there is internet connectivity.

"From our user-friendly FEMA App that provides real-time weather alerts and helps people prepare for common hazards, to the use of geospatial tools to identify the hardest hit communities following a disaster, FEMA continues to use every tool at our disposal to help people before, during and after disaster," said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. "We are excited to partner with Meta and the Ad Council on this new virtual reality tool and we are eager to further leverage technology to protect people and save lives."

"You don't have much time to act in the event of a fire," said Michelle Hillman, Ad Council Chief Campaign Development Officer. "Being able to practice a fire safety and evacuation plan before the emergency arises will reduce the chance of panic and ultimately save lives."

"At Meta we are building for the next generation of the internet, which is why our partnership with FEMA and the Ad Council to develop immersive experiences in Virtual and Augmented Reality like the Escape Plan is so important," said Caitlin



Ryan, VP Creative Shop EMEA – Meta. “In VR, mistakes can be made without real-world consequences, ensuring individuals can safely learn and are better prepared, ready to act quickly in a real emergency. The VR version of this product creates the sensation of being present in a virtual three-dimensional environment, allowing you to experience and learn what you need to do to escape a home fire. While the Escape Plan is a virtual experience, the impact will be real.”

Virtual reality is emerging as an effective way to augment professional and personal emergency training and can have advantages over large-scale training programs that take extensive time and resources. Experiences can be developed to simulate an environment, whether the setting be in an office, emergency room or in your own home, rather than placing the trainee in the potential path of harm.

“Proven technology like automatic fire sprinklers, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors save the lives of civilians every day, and the U.S. Fire Administration has long [advocated](#) for the use of immersive learning tools to protect our nation’s fire fighters and increase public safety education,” said U.S. Administrator Moore-Merrell. “It is our hope that ‘The Escape Plan’ and other technological advancements will protect even more people and help us to further address America’s persistent fire problem.”

“The Escape Plan” joins a suite of digital tools leveraged by FEMA to help people before, during and after disasters. Last year, the Ready Campaign launched an [easy-to-use digital form](#) to help individuals and families create an emergency plan on their phone or laptop. The form can be saved onto any device and emailed to other members of their family and is available in both English and Spanish languages. And just last year, [FEMA updated its mobile app](#) to give users increased personalization options and help them take charge of disasters. The new app is more accessible, with increased functionality and innovative features to help people prepare for, protect against and recover from disasters.

To create your family’s emergency plan, or to learn more about disaster preparedness and home fire escape plans, visit [Ready.gov](#) or [Listo.gov](#).

