If There is a Fire, What Should I Do?

- Get yourself and all others out of and away from the vehicle. If the vehicle is in a garage or other structure, exit immediately.
- After you are a safe distance from the vehicle, call the fire department at 911 or the local emergency telephone number. Tell them the location of the fire.
- Remain away from the vehicle: do not attempt to get back into a burning vehicle to retrieve personal property.
- Never put yourself in danger using a fire extinguisher. If you do use a fire extinguisher, only do so from a safe distance and always have a means to get away.
- It is recommended to use a fire extinguisher approved for use on class "B" and class "C" fires.
- Do not open the hood or trunk if you suspect a fire under it. Air could rush in, enlarging the fire, leading to injury.

- The dangers of motor vehicle fires often are overlooked. Each year, these fires kill over 500 people and injure thousands more. Toxic gases and other hazardous substances, along with flying debris and explosions, combine to produce serious dangers in motor vehicle fires.

For more information or copies of this publication, please contact:

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Motor Vehicle Fires

What You Need to Know

FEMA

a seldom recognized part of AMERICA'S FIRE PROBLEM is MOTOR VEHICLE FIRES

Motor Vehicle Fires Can be DANGEROUS

Fires in motor vehicles can produce toxic gases. Automobiles, trucks, and other motor vehicles are made of many synthetic materials that emit harmful, if not deadly gases when they burn. A main by-product of fires is a lethal concentration of carbon monoxide, which is an odorless, colorless, and tasteless gas.

Fire can cause fatal or debilitating burn injuries. A vehicle fire can generate heat upwards of 1,500°F. Keep in mind that water boils at 212°, and that most foods are cooked at temperatures of less than 500°F. Flames from burning vehicles can often shoot out distances of 10 feet or more.

Parts of the vehicle can burst because of heat, shooting debris great distances. Bumper and hatchback door struts, two-piece tire rims, magnesium wheels, drive shafts, grease seals, axle, and engine parts, all can become lethal shrapnel. Vehicle fires also may cause air bags to deploy.

Although relatively rare, gas tanks of motor vehicles can rupture and spray flammable fuel, posing a clear potential for serious injury.

In even more extraordinary instances, gas tanks have been known to explode. Hazardous materials, such as battery acid, can cause injury even without burning.

Vehicle fires are so dangerous that firefighters wear full protective fire-resistant clothing and equipment, as well as self-contained breathing apparatus to keep themselves safe. They also have the ability to quickly put out vehicle fires with large amounts of water or other extinguishing agents. You don't have these safety advantages so use extra caution.

Motor Vehicle Fires Can be DANGEROUS

Source: National Fire Protection Association

- Nearly 1 out of 5 fires involves motor vehicles.
- 1 out of 8 fire deaths results from motor vehicle fires.
- Approximately 500 are killed and 1,800 civilians and 1,200 firefighters are injured each year from motor vehicle fires.