

Discussion



Myth of Panic during Fires Panic, as many would say is inevitable in the event of a disaster, but what many do not know is that the lesser people panic the lesser the casualties. Panic is the immediate reaction that an individual would exhibit when confronted with an event that would endanger their lives for example, fire. It is also a temporary state of fear with mixed reactions going through an individual's mind as to what to do when faced with possible harm (Clarke, 2002).

Researchers have made tremendous discoveries as to what the obvious reactions would be to unexpected fires therefore bringing about the myths on panic during infernos. To illustrate this, when people get into a building they would clearly mark the entrances and the exits as a matter of instinct. Unfortunately, what they do not notice would be the fire exit points as they obviously assume that the common entrance or exit points may be the safest exits when a fire occurs. Individuals fear using the emergency exit points mainly due to the unfamiliarity to the route since they did not use them when accessing the building (Clarke, 2002). Secondly, uncertainty of whether the route would lead to safety in that they may not be open is also another reason why these routes are not used during an emergency. Moreover, a trait that came out during these researches is the different reactions between men and women when confronted by a fire. For women, the most obvious thing that they would do would be to evacuate infants or the elderly, if any. Ironically, for their male counterparts trying to fight the fire would be their immediate response instead of scampering for safety. On the other hand, the reaction by toddlers would be very different to that of adults, as children tend to hide and await rescue by people who are older than they are (Clarke, 2002). Children perceive those older than them to be

more able to lead them to safety as they have been around long enough to know what to do and when. Even when being led to safety, children would feel the need to carry with them something that they hold dear, like a toy or a doll, and then feel as if they also rescued something. These clearly depict the various reactions that different age and genders would have in the event of a fire.

On the contrary, many tend to think that commotion would awake people when they are in deep sleep but the opposite would do, soothing and peaceful sound. Therefore, in the occurrence of a fire those sleeping would consider unnecessary noise to be a nuisance, ignoring the imminent danger present as other researchers found out.

Further, the lesser the time to do the evacuation procedure the more people are shown to safety. This is because when there is little time no one would think of gathering their personal effects and risk fire catching up with them but when people think there is time, they waste it gathering things that are of less value. Well-established institutions have fire evacuation procedures but many lose their lives as they lack the patience to follow through the whole procedure. They consider it a waste of precious time that may be put to other use like running to safety but end up using the wrong routes as they do so (Clarke, 2002).

In conclusion, casualties during fires are mainly due to reckless reactions, which include panic, but if people learn to contain their fear then they may reduce. Though the efforts to educate people on the same seem an unrealizable dream, it should be considered an individual initiative. Patience and calm if exhibited might just be the key to safety as they bring sobriety and clear thinking when faced by calamity.

References

Clarke, L. (2002). Panic: myth or reality. Retrieved on Sep 11, 2012 from http://leeclarke.com/docs/Clarke_panic.pdf