

HOW TO RESCUE SOMEONE STUCK IN A CHIMNEY

- 1 Obtain a long, sturdy rope.**

Make sure the rope is longer than the length of the chimney. You will need approximately 10 feet of rope for each story (including the attic), plus 10 additional feet.
- 2 Tie a knot in the rope every two feet.**
- 3 Position yourself on the roof of the house.**

The opening of the chimney at the fireplace end is probably too narrow for you to pull the person out. You must perform your rescue from above.
- 4 Communicate with the person.**

Make sure that the person who is stuck is still conscious and able to help with the rescue. Tell him you are coming.
- 5 Lower the rope down the chimney.**

The rope should be tied securely around the chimney or another immovable object. Slowly feed the other end hand-over-hand down the chimney.
- 6 Tell the victim to grab the rope.**

Holding onto the knots provides both you and the victim a better grip.

- 7 Pull the victim up.**

Unless you are much larger than the victim (and very strong), you will not be able to pull the victim out unaided. The victim can help by using footholds to brace and climb. If the victim cannot climb out or otherwise help in the rescue, enlist others to help you pull the rope.

- 8 Call the fire department.**

If you cannot extricate the person from the chimney, call the fire department for assistance.

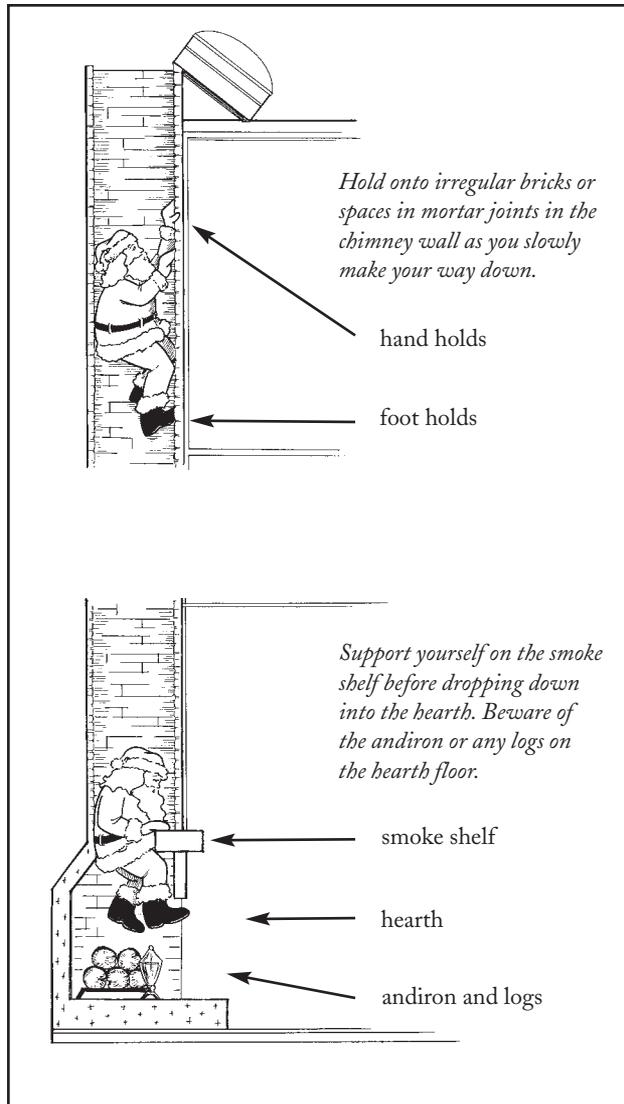
HOW TO CLIMB DOWN A CHIMNEY

- 1 Feel and smell for a lighted fire.**

Do not enter a chimney that is hot or smoking.
- 2 Assess the size and type of chimney.**

Some chimney flues may be as narrow as 12 by 12 inches, too small for an adult to enter. Chimneys 24 by 24 inches or larger are ideal. Big, old houses are more likely to have large chimneys and less likely to have an entry-impending damper at the bottom.
- 3 Remove the chimney cap.**

Many chimney openings are covered with a cap to prevent animals from entering the flue. The cap will have either four short legs tucked into the chimney and held in place by gravity, or four pressure screws attached to the inside surface of the flue.



- 4** **Examine the inner surface of the chimney.**
Use a flashlight to peer into the flue. Homes built after 1935 may have a flue lined with clay tiles. Older homes have unlined brick flues. Brick flues have a more irregular surface, offering better hand and footholds. Some newer homes may have metal-lined flues. Avoid these, as they offer minimal traction.
- 5** **Enter the chimney feet first.**
Keep your hands above you and hold onto irregular bricks or spaces in the mortar joints. If the chimney is clay-lined, concentrate on the joints between the clay tiles for your handholds and footholds. These joints are two feet apart. The chimney is likely narrow enough that you can lean back against one wall while bracing your feet on the opposite wall.
- 6** **Move slowly toward the bottom of the chimney.**
You will quickly be covered with creosote (hardened soot) unless the chimney has recently been cleaned. Fresh creosote may be powdery and difficult to grip, or sticky (formed by burning moist wood), aiding your descent. Old creosote will be hard, shiny, and very slick. Keep your body straight to lessen the chance of getting stuck on sticky soot.
- 7** **Look for the smoke chamber.**
This brick-lined area is below the flue and has large amounts of soot and creosote. When you reach the smoke chamber, you will be just above the smoke shelf and close to the bottom of the chimney.

8 Use the smoke shelf to brace yourself.

The smoke shelf is a few feet above the hearth (the area where the fire is made, also called the “firebox”). This angled brick shelf is off to the bottom rear of the flue. It catches rain and funnels the wider area of smoke that comes from the hearth into the narrower passage of the flue. You may be able to rest your feet on it before continuing.

9 Open the damper.

Most fireplaces have a damper, a metal door that slides or swings closed to prevent drafts and to keep heat from escaping up the flue when no fire is present. Open the damper by pulling it toward you; use a heavy magnet if you cannot pull it open by hand. Some dampers use a screw-type mechanism that can be opened only from inside the house: If it or the damper is too small to pass through, or is screwed shut, you will have to climb back out the top of the chimney.

10 Lower yourself into the hearth.

If you can see the hearth, and can fit through the opening, carefully drop down into the fireplace and enter the house. Beware of an andiron or logs on the hearth floor.

**WORST-CASE
SCENARIO.**