

FIRE SAFETY ALL OVER YOUR HOME

Most fatal fires are home fires. You can protect your household and your property by following these fire-safe practices.

Smoke Detectors

Install smoke detectors on every level of your home and outside every sleeping area. Also install smoke detectors in every sleeping area as well.

- Test smoke detectors monthly, following manufacturer's instructions.
- Install new batteries at least once a year or when your detector 'chirps' to warn you that battery power is low.
- Install smoke detectors away from cooking vapors to prevent nuisance alarms, and clean your detectors regularly, following manufacturer's instructions.
- Replace any smoke detector that is more than 10 years old.

For complete home protection, consider installing an automatic fire-sprinkler system.

Escape Plans

Plan and practice your escape. Every member of the household should know at least two exits from each room. Make sure that doors and windows needed for escape are unobstructed and easy to open. If an exit route involves an upper story window, make sure there is a safe way to reach the ground. Decide on a meeting place outside the home where every member of the household can gather once they've escaped. Know the phone number of the fire department, and arrange to use a neighbor's phone in the event of a fire.

Living and Family Rooms

Remove fire hazards, and practice fire-safe behavior to prevent home fires. Use extreme caution with cigarettes, matches, and lighters. Provide large, deep, non-tip ashtrays for smokers. Before you go to bed or leave your home after people have been smoking, check for smoldering butts under and behind furniture cushions. Use only child-resistant lighters, and keep matches and lighters up high, out of the sight and reach of children - preferably in a locked cabinet.

Keep space heaters and wood stoves at least 3 feet (1 meter) away from anything that can burn. Always turn space heaters off when you go to bed or leave the home. Never leave children alone near a working fireplace, wood stove, or space heater. Refuel kerosene heaters, with kerosene only, outside and after the heater has cooled.

Use a metal fire screen on your fireplace. Have your chimney inspected by a professional once a year, and have it cleaned if creosote has built up in the flue. Use only dry, seasoned wood in wood stoves and fireplaces. Add wood to fireplaces carefully; sparks can fly into the room while the screen is open.

Kitchen

Stove burners and ovens can burn you and start fires. Always be attentive to possible dangers.

- Always stay with the stove when cooking.
- Keep your stove-top and oven clean and clear.
- Wear tight-fitting or rolled-up sleeves when cooking to avoid catching your clothing on fire.
- Keep combustible materials away from the stove. Don't hang curtains, pot holders, or towels near burners or the oven.
- Turn pot handles inward so they can't be bumped or pulled.
- Enforce a 'kid-free zone' 3 feet around all cooking equipment.

- If a small fire starts in a pan, carefully slide a lid over the pan to smother the flames, and turn off the burner. Leave the lid in place until the pan is cool.
- Never pour water on a grease fire.
- In microwave ovens, use only those containers designed for microwave use.

Workshops, Storage Areas, and Outdoors

You may have flammable materials in your basement or garage. Exercise fire safety inside and out.

- If you store gasoline, keep only small quantities outside your home in a shed or detached garage. Keep gasoline in sealed, approved containers designed to store it. Use gasoline only as a motor fuel, never as a cleaning agent.
- Before starting your lawnmower, snow-blower, or motorcycle, move it away from gasoline fumes. Let small motors cool before you refuel them.
- Always store paint and other flammable liquids in their original, labeled containers with tight-fitting lids. Use and store all flammable liquids far away from appliances, heaters, pilot lights, and other heat sources.
- If a fuse or circuit breaker blows, never replace it with one that exceeds the amperage rating of the circuit, and never replace a fuse with a penny or other conductive material.
- Remove trash from your home. Don't store anything near a furnace or water heater.
- Use outdoor cooking grills with caution. Never use gasoline to start or enhance the fire, and don't add charcoal lighter fluid once the fire has started - even to glowing coals. You can use dry kindling to revive the flame. Use cooking grills outside only, and well away from the building, vegetation, and other combustibles. Make sure children are supervised while you are using the grill.