



Fire Prevention Tips

A small fire can grow into a deadly one within one or two minutes. To help prevent a tragedy, closely inspect your home to eliminate potential hazards. Prepare your home for an emergency, and teach your family about the dangers of fire and how to escape.



Put a smoke alarm on every level of your home, outside each sleeping area, and in every bedroom.

- Smoke alarms can be battery-operated or electrically hardwired in your home and are available at a variety of price points.
- If you have hearing problems, use alarms with flashing strobe lights and vibration.
- Test smoke alarms every month. Replace batteries once a year, even if alarms are hardwired.
- Test your smoke alarms at night to see if your child will wake up and respond to the alarm. Children sleep more deeply and may not wake up. If your child does not wake up to the alarm, try an alarm where you can program your voice to alert him or her.
- Mount smoke alarms high on walls or ceilings since smoke rises. Ceiling-mounted alarms should be installed at least 4 inches away from the nearest wall. Wall-mounted alarms should be installed 4 to 12 inches away from the ceiling.
- Replace all smoke alarms every 10 years.
- Consider installing both ionization alarms, which are better at sensing flaming fires, and photoelectric alarms, which are better at sensing slow, smoky fires, or dual sensor alarms.
- Consider installing a home sprinkler system.

Plan and practice several escape routes and a safe place to meet outside.

- Plan and practice two escape routes out of each room of the house. It is important to have an alternate escape route in case one is blocked by fire.
- Have a designated person to help young children and others who might have difficulty escaping.
- Fire drills should be practiced at least twice a year. Home fires and home fire-related deaths are more likely to occur during cold-weather months, December through February.
- Practice your escape plan at night to see if your child awakes to the smoke alarms.
- Designate an outside meeting place, so all members of the family can be accounted for quickly. Once you are outside, call the fire department or 911 from a cell phone or neighbor's phone.

Teach safety. A child who is coached properly ahead of time may have a better chance of surviving.

- Children should know the sound of the smoke alarm. When they hear it, teach them to get outside quickly and crawl low if there is smoke.
- Touch doors with the back of your hand before opening them. If the door is hot, use an alternative exit.
- Teach children never to go back into a burning building for anything such as a toy or pet, and to call the fire department or 911 from a neighbor's home or a cell phone outside.
- Teach children that if their clothes catch on fire, they should immediately stop, drop to the ground and roll themselves back and forth quickly to extinguish the flames.
- Take children to your local fire station for a tour. Children will be able to see a firefighter in full gear and learn that he or she is someone who saves children – not someone to be afraid of or hide from.
- Teach children to never touch or play with matches, candles, gasoline or lighters.
- Be sure you are not teaching your children bad habits. Do not let them see you smoke in bed or disconnect smoke alarm batteries.

Check the kitchen for preventable hazards and supervise children at all times in the kitchen.

- Keep children away from cooking and heating appliances. Never leave the kitchen while cooking and never leave a child alone.
- Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stovetop.
- Cook with pots and pans on back burners. Turn handles away from the front.

Eliminate other potential hazards.

- Keep matches, lighters, and gasoline locked away and out of children's reach. Keep flammable items such as clothing, furniture, newspapers or magazines at least three feet away from the fireplace, heater or radiator.
- Store all flammable liquids such as gasoline outside of the home.
- Place space heaters at least 3 feet from anything that can catch fire such as curtains or papers.
- Always turn space heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Plug an electric space heater into an outlet with enough capacity. Never plug it into an extension cord.
- Place covers over unused electrical outlets and avoid plugging several appliance cords into the same electrical socket.
- Replace old or frayed electrical wires and appliance cords, and keep them on top of, not beneath rugs.
- Establish a "Kid-Free Zone" around fireplaces, including gas fireplaces, and wood burning stoves. Glass fire screens can get very hot.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Place candles in a safe location away from combustible materials and where children or pets cannot tip them over.
- Have chimneys cleaned and inspected once a year