

Prevent Fires & Burns

Simple actions can make you and your family safer and keep your things from going up in smoke.

Most home fire deaths occur at night. If you think that you'll be awoken by smoke, noise, or breaking glass, then you're almost certainly wrong. Every fire produces large amounts of carbon monoxide which is a very toxic and odorless gas. You will most likely be overcome by this as you sleep and never wake up.

Smoke alarms can make the difference between dying in your sleep and getting your family to safety. About two-thirds of home fire deaths occur in homes that have no smoke alarms or have ones that are not working.



USE SMOKE ALARMS

Do This



Install and maintain smoke alarms on every floor of your home, in every bedroom, and outside each sleeping area. If you have children, check out smoke alarms that allow you to program your voice to tell your children, by their names, what to do when the alarm goes off. Find out your state's code for smoke alarms from www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/.

Not That



Don't remove the battery because you have had false alarms in the past. To help prevent false alarms, do not install a smoke alarm within 10 feet of cooking appliances in the kitchen. Don't put off installing smoke alarms because you don't get around to it or cannot afford them. Ask your local fire department about services that provide free or low-cost smoke alarms.

Do This

Test smoke alarms monthly. Replace batteries at least once or twice a year, such as in the spring and/or fall when daylight saving time changes. Change the battery right away if the device makes a "chirping" sound.



Not That



Do not keep smoke alarms longer than 10 years. Replace them sooner if they do not work right or are damaged. Some smoke alarms have a 10-year lithium battery that does not need to be changed. After 10 years, get a new smoke alarm.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER SAFETY & BE TOBACCO FREE

Do This



Keep fire extinguishers near the kitchen, in the garage, and at the top of the basement stairwell. Learn how to use them. Check them monthly. If you have an outdoor grill or fire pit, keep a fire extinguisher close by.

Not That



Do not try to stop a fire with an extinguisher if you do not know how to use it or are not sure you can put out even a small, contained fire. Get everyone out of the house first. (Close windows and doors on your way out, if you can.) **Call 911 after** you get out.

Do This



If oxygen is used in the home for medical reasons, follow the device's safety rules. Keep the device at least five feet away from wood stoves, fireplaces, other heat sources, and open flames. Post one or more "OXYGEN IN USE-NO SMOKING" signs in your house.

Not That



Do not smoke or allow smoking if anyone in the house uses oxygen. Do not have things that can ignite near the oxygen tank. Examples are aerosol sprays that have flammable contents, grease and oils, and lotions that contain these.

Do This

Keep your home, garage, and cars tobacco free. Stress the importance of keeping a tobacco-free home to your children.



Not That



Do not allow anyone to smoke in the home. NEVER smoke in bed.



CANDLE SAFETY

Do This



Supervise the use of lit candles. Snuff candles or blow them out before you leave the room and go to bed. It is best to enclose lit candles in candle holders.

Not That



Never leave lit candles near curtains and materials that can catch fire. Do not place lit candles where they can easily be tipped over.

Do This



Be especially careful with lit candles used during holidays.

Not That



Do not use lighted candles in jack-o-lanterns or give to children to hold. Costumes could easily catch fire.

Do This



Instead of lit candles, use battery-operated or flameless candles. Use flashlights if the power goes out.

Not That



Do not use candles on stairs.

COOKING SAFETY

Do This



Use back burners on the stove top. Turn the handles of hot pots and pans inward. Place child safety covers on stove knobs. Supervise children near stoves.

Not That



NEVER leave a young child near an oven or stove that is in use. Do not leave handles of pots and pans turned outward.

Do This



To put out a grease fire on top of the stove, turn the burner off and cover the pan with a metal lid. If the grease fire is small, put baking soda on it.

Not That



Do not fan a grease fire or try to put it out with a towel. Do not throw water on the fire.

Do This



If a fire starts in a microwave oven or regular oven, close the door and turn the oven off. If the fire does not stop or gets worse, get out of the house and **call 911** or the fire department.

Not That



Do not leave the microwave oven door open if something smokes and catches fire.

Do This



When cooking foods on the stove top, stay in the kitchen. Set a timer to keep foods from burning and to remind you that the oven is on. Drain foods in a large colander in the sink. Look away from the steam.

Not That



Do not leave foods cooking on top of the stove or in the oven unattended. Do not hold a child while you are standing near a hot oven or stove. Do not wear loose-fitting clothing because it can easily catch on fire.

Do This



Use oven mitts and pot holders when handling hot pots and pans. Turn the stove and oven off right after you are done cooking. Protect your eyes from hot steam.

Not That



Do not have curtains, towels, and other flammable materials within 3 feet of the stove. Do not hang towels on the oven door handle when the oven is on.

Do This



Supervise children and pets around outdoor cooking areas, especially around turkey fryers and fire pits that have flames close to the ground. Cover fire pits with a screen.

Not That



NEVER leave gas grills, charcoal grills, and fire pits unattended. Do not use charcoal grills inside the house. Never let children or pets near turkey fryers.

HEATING SAFETY

Do This

Keep bedding, curtains, and anything that can catch fire at least three feet away from space heaters and baseboard heaters. Use a space heater that shuts off on its own if it is tipped over. If you have young children, keep guard rails around space heaters.



Not That



Do not leave heaters plugged in when they are not in use. Do not leave young children unsupervised in a room with a space heater that is on.

Do This



Use a free-standing wood burning stove as directed. If you have young children, keep guard rails around space heaters and wood stoves.

Not That



Never use wood burning stoves or heaters to dry clothing or other items that can catch fire.

Do This



Hide and store matches and lighters high up and out of children's reach. Teach children not to play with these.

Not That



NEVER leave cigarettes, lighters, or matches where children can get them. Do not let children play with or near gas tanks or cans.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Do This



If a cord is damaged or gives off smoke, shocks, or sparks, turn off its circuit breaker before you unplug it. Turn off the circuit breaker before replacing sockets and using outdoor generators, too. Replace damaged appliances, hot or damaged cords, and light switches that flicker or feel hot.

Not That



Do not overload wall sockets or power strips. Do not use wall sockets that have been melted or burned. Don't forget to register new appliances with the manufacturer so you can find out about potential problems.

Do This



Use ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) breakers in bathrooms, kitchens, and sockets near water. Supervise children using blow dryers, curling irons, etc. Choose ones with the UL safety logo and that have an automatic shut off feature.

Not That



Do not use or let children use small electrical appliances when their hands or feet are wet or when they are near water. And, do not leave clothes irons on and unattended.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Do This



Use holiday decorations safely. Use ones that resist or retard flames and have the UL safety logo. Turn off all lighted decorations before you leave the house or go to bed. Use strings of lights as directed by the manufacturer.

Not That



Do not put decorations too close to lit candles, burning fireplaces, or any other source where they can catch fire. Do not let Christmas trees get too dry. Do not use indoor lights outdoors.

Do This



Keep escape ladders in upstairs bedrooms. Put child safety stickers on windows to alert firemen where children sleep.

Not That



Do not keep electric blankets on all night long unless they are marked, "suitable for all night use."

Do This



Have children between 9 months and 14 years old wear pajamas that meet federal flammability standards. Or, put them to sleep in tight-fitting pajamas.

Not That



Do not have children sleep in sweats, t-shirts, and loose-fitting or oversized clothing made of cotton or cotton blends. These can easily catch on fire.

Do This



Use safety approved dryer venting. Clean the dryer vent after every cycle. Every 3 months, inspect the duct, dampers, and access covers for damage. Remove lint build-up.

Not That



Don't machine dry items that have been soaked in gasoline, vegetable or cooking oil, machine oil, or other chemicals or that have been cleaned with dry cleaning solvents.

Do This



Sleep with bedroom doors closed. If a fire starts in the house, get out first. Then **call 911!**

Not That



Do not take time to collect personal items before leaving the house. A small fire can get out of control in less than 30 seconds.