

# Your Healthy Home's Fire Safety



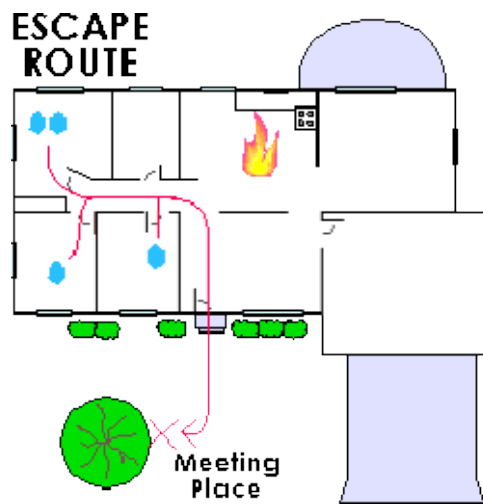
**DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOUR HOME!**

More than 3,500 Americans die each year in fires and approximately 18,300 are injured. Cooking incidents are the #1 cause of residential house fires but there are numerous other causes. Please use the following HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST at least annually and please consider the other tips and information that follows.

<b>HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST</b>		
<b>PRE-FIRE PLANNING</b>		<b>YES NO</b>
Have you planned at least two ways to get out of every room in your home?		
Do you keep exit routes clear in your home?		
Does everyone in your home know how to notify your fire department quickly and correctly in case of fire?		
Do you have working smoke detectors in the home and in all bedrooms? Don't forget the carbon monoxide detectors.		
Do you have at least one fire extinguisher? Consider one in the kitchen, garage and all work shop areas.		
<b>ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN</b>		<b>YES NO</b>
Do you make it a rule never to leave small children alone or unattended?		
Do your baby-sitters know the first rule of safety in fire emergencies? —Get everybody out fast, and don't go back in.		
Do you show your baby-sitters the escape routes from your home, and give instructions on the correct way to report a fire?		
<b>GOOD SMOKING HABITS</b>		<b>YES NO</b>
Is smoking in bed strictly against the rule in your home?		
Do you always make sure that cigarette, cigar and pipe ashes are completely extinguished before you dispose of them? Before going to bed, be SURE there are no cigarettes still burning.		
Are matches kept out of the reach of children? Keep matches and lighters stored safely ( <i>too high for children to reach</i> ).		
<b>HEATING AND COOKING</b>		<b>YES NO</b>
Are furnaces, stoves, fireplaces and flues and vent pipes kept in good repair and located far enough away from combustible walls and ceilings so that they do not create a hazard? Use a fireplace screen to prevent sparks from flying.		
If you have portable space heaters in your home do you see that they are properly maintained and located? Keep portable space heaters away from people, curtains, and furniture.		
Do you have an annual inspection of your heating system and fireplace? Have these checked and cleaned each year.		
Could clothing, aprons get into things when you cook? Wear tight-fitting clothing when you cook.		
Can you stop a cooking fire safely? Smother a pan fire with a lid. Never use water. If cooking oil starts to smoke, turn down the heat. Don't throw whatever's handy on the counter, such as dumping flour from the bag, on the fire ( <i>explosion!</i> )		
<b>ELECTRICITY</b>		<b>YES NO</b>
Do you see that extension cords are never run under rugs or hooked over nails? Avoid using extension cords wherever possible ( <i>especially small-wired cords use with high-wattage appliances.</i> )		
When the breaker "trips" or a fuse blows, do you investigate WHY it happened? If a fuse blows ( <i>or a breaker "trips"</i> ), find the cause. Remove excess appliances ( <i>lamps, stereo components, space heaters, etc.</i> ) from a breaker circuit that frequently "trips" and consider having it evaluated by a licensed electrician.		

Is your TV well ventilated? Allow air space around the TV to prevent overheating. If it doesn't work right, it can be a fire danger.	YES	NO
<b>GOOD HOUSEKEEPING</b>		
Do you keep rubbish cleaned out of the attic, basement, closets, garage and yard? Sort and remove rubbish. Don't store things near the furnace or heater.	YES	NO
Are gasoline and other flammable liquids stored in safety cans, and kept well away from both heat and children? Move flammable liquids away from heat. Do not store flammable liquids in the home. Keep them stored outside and away from the house in a separate storage building. Don't fill a hot lawn mower or other motor; let it cool first.		

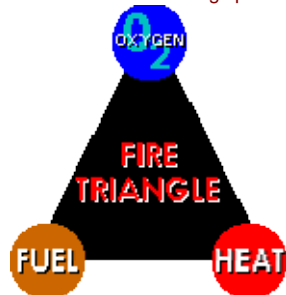
## IF YOUR HOME CAUGHT FIRE, WOULD YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO? WOULD YOUR CHILDREN?



1. Prepare a floor plan of your home showing at least **two** ways out of each room.
2. Sleep with your bedroom door closed. It helps to hold back heat and smoke.
3. Agree on a fixed location out-of-doors where family members are to gather for a head count.
4. Make certain that no one goes back inside.

## Practice - Practice - Practice.

For a fire to exist there must be three things present... **OXYGEN, FUEL & HEAT**



These three elements make up what is commonly called the FIRE TRIANGLE.



Oxygen is always present in the home. If, however, you can separate heat sources from combustibles, you will have taken the first step toward fire prevention.



### HEAT SOURCES:

Anything that produces heat, for example...

1. Stoves
2. Heating appliances
3. Fireplaces
4. Damaged electrical wiring



### FUEL SOURCES:

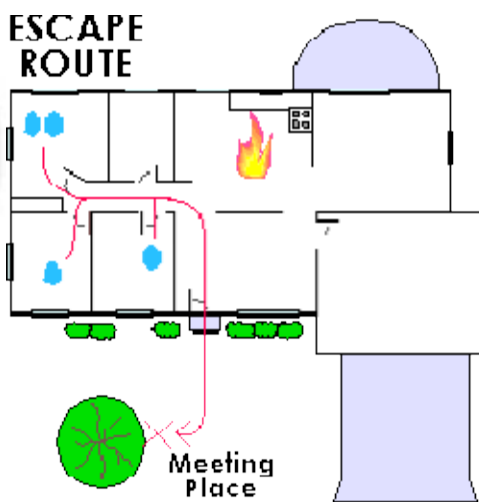
Anything that will burn, for example...

- Clothing
- Furniture
- Curtains
- Flammable liquids

## IF A FIRE SHOULD OCCUR IN YOUR HOME...

### 1. GET OUT OF THE HOUSE.

Familiarize yourself with at least two exits from each room; for example, one window and one door. Know where the exits are; practice using them.



### 2. HAVE A MEETING PLACE LOCATED OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

A fire is no time to be worrying about who made it out and who did not. By establishing a central meeting place outside the house, you can count heads and not have to wonder who might still be inside.

### 3. PHONE THE FIRE DEPARTMENT FROM A NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE or CELL PHONE

### 4. NEVER GO BACK INSIDE FOR ANY REASON!

Once you are outside, do not go back inside. The fire department will be there in a matter of minutes. Stay at the meeting place and wait for the fire department.

### IN A FIRE, SECONDS COUNT!

For early detection of fires, install **smoke detectors** near your sleeping areas. If you have a multi-story house, install smoke detectors at each level in the home.

Design a home fire escape plan; practice using it.



Establishing EXIT DRILLS IN THE HOME (E.D.I.T.H.) will insure that everyone in the home will be familiar with the proper procedures should a fire occur.

If you have sleeping areas located on the second floor, provide an escape ladder or rope. Check these carefully to make certain they are safe.

Check windows that would be used in an escape to see that they open easily.

Should you be caught in smoke, CRAWL! Smoke rises, so stay close to the floor where the air will be less toxic.

Clothing, should it ignite, will burn rapidly. If your clothes ignite, DO NOT RUN...**STOP, DROP, AND ROLL!**

## **REMEMBER, THE BEST STEP TO TAKE IS TO PREVENT FIRES FROM OCCURRING**

Knowing what to do should fire occur is very important. More important still is the **prevention** of a fire. Take the time to inspect your home for possible safety hazards, bare wires, and improperly operating heating equipment.

Fire prevention is something the entire family may participate in. Encourage children to assist with checking the home for hazards.

By taking the time to carefully inspect your home for possible hazards, you may prevent a major catastrophe later on.

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### **SMOKE DETECTORS**

**Smoke is responsible for three out of four fire related deaths.**

- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home and inside of all sleeping areas.
- Test every detector at least once a month. [See your instruction book for the location of the test button.]
- Keep smoke detectors dust free. Replace batteries with new ones at least once a year, or sooner if the detector makes a chirping sound.
- If you have a smoke detector directly wired into your electrical system, be sure that the little signal light is on. This tells you that the alarm is active.
- Inexpensive smoke detectors are available for the hearing impaired.

### **FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**

**They remain your best bet if you're present when a fire begins.**

- Fire extinguishers should be mounted in the kitchen, garage, and workshops.
- Purchase ABC type extinguishers for extinguishing all types of fires.
- Learn how to use your fire extinguishers before there is an emergency (See links of interest below)
- Remember, use an extinguisher on small fires only. If there is a large fire, get out immediately and call 911 from another location.

### **CLOTHES DRYER**

**Under some circumstances, dangerous heat can build up in a dryer.**

- Never** leave home with the clothes dryer running.
- Dryers must be vented to the outside, not into a wall or attic. The vent pipe should be a rigid metal pipe and you should always use a quality dryer connector pipe, not the cheap flexible ones.
- Clean the lint screen frequently to keep the airway clear and the vent system to help prevent fires.
- Never put in synthetic fabrics, plastic, rubber, or foam because they retain heat and may ignite.

## **ELECTRICAL HAZARDS**

### **Electricity, the silent servant, can become a silent assassin.**

- It is better not to use extension cords. If you feel you must use one, make sure that it is not frayed or worn. Do not run it under a rug or twist it around a nail or hook.
- Never overload a circuit. In particular, the use of "octopus" outlets, outlet extensions that accommodate several plugs, is strongly discouraged.
- Do not use light bulb wattage which is too high for the fixture. Look for the label inside each fixture which tells the maximum wattage.
- Check periodically for loose wall receptacles, loose wires, or loose lighting fixtures. Sparking means that you've waited too long and a fire is possible.
- Allow air space around the TV to prevent overheating. The same applies to plug-in radios and other electronic equipment and powerful lamps.
- If a circuit breaker trips or a fuse blows frequently, immediately cut down on the number of appliances on that line and consider having it evaluated by a licensed electrician.
- Be sure all electrical equipment bears the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) label.
- In many older homes, the capacity of the wiring system has not designed for today's modern appliances. Overloaded electrical systems invite fire. Watch for these overload signals: dimming lights when an appliance is turned on, a shrinking TV picture, slow heating appliances, or fuses or breakers blowing frequently. Call a qualified electrician to get expert help.

## **KITCHEN**

### **Careless cooking is the number one cause of residential fires. Never leave cooking unattended.**

- It's wise to have a fire extinguisher near the kitchen. Keep it 10 feet away from the stove on the exit side of the kitchen.
- Never pour water on a grease fire; turn off the stove and cover the pan with a lid, or close the oven door.
- Keep pot handles on the stove pointing to the back, and always watch young children in the kitchen.
- Don't store items on or near the stove top, as they could catch fire.
- Keep kitchen appliances clean and in good condition, and turn them off and disconnect them when not in use.
- Don't overload kitchen electrical outlets and don't use appliances with frayed or cracked wires.
- Wear tight-fitting clothing when you cook. Here's why: An electrical coil on the stove reaches a temperature of 800 degrees. A gas flame goes over 1,000 degrees. Your dish towel or pot holder can catch fire at 400 degrees. So can your bathrobe, apron, or loose sleeve.
- Be sure your stove is not located under a window in which curtains are hanging.
- Clean the exhaust hood and duct over the stove regularly, and wipe up spilled grease as soon as the surface of the stove is cool.
- Operate your microwave only when there is food in it.

## **CHILDREN and GRANDCHILDREN**

### **One-fourth of all fire-deaths of children are from fires started by children.**

- Keep lighters and matches out of the reach of children.
- Never leave children unattended with fire or space heaters.
- Children are naturally curious about fire, so keep an eye on them. But if a child repeatedly plays with fire or seems to have a fascination with fire, seek professional help at once.
- If youngsters live with you or stay overnight occasionally, be sure that they know how to escape from every room and are part of your emergency exit plan.

## **GASOLINE AND OTHER FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS**

### **Those cans aren't painted red just for decoration sake!**

- Flammable liquids should be stored only in approved safety containers, and the containers should be kept outside the house and garage in a separate storage shed.
- Gas up lawn or any fuel powered equipment outside, away from enclosed areas and any source of sparks or heat.
- Start the equipment 10 feet from where you filled it with fuel.
- Don't fill a hot lawn mower, or other motor; let it cool first.
- Never clean floors or do other general cleaning with gasoline or flammable liquids.

## **SMOKING**

**If you actually believe that you're immune from cancer, heart disease, emphysema, and other ills, at least worry about burning to death.**

- Never smoke in bed.
- Don't smoke when you are drinking or are abnormally tired.
- Use large, deep ashtrays, and empty them frequently.
- Never dump an ashtray into the trash without wetting the butts and ashes first.

## **Related Publications & Links of Interest**

-  [Protecting Your Family from Fire](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-130.pdf)  
<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-130.pdf>
-  [Protecting Your Family from Fire - Spanish](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-129.pdf)  
<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-129.pdf>
- [Consumer Product Safety Commission Fire Safety Publications](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/fire_sfy.html)  
[http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/fire\\_sfy.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/fire_sfy.html)
- [Using a fire extinguisher](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCSms-jyOao) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCSms-jyOao>