

Fire Safety Checklists

THROUGHOUT THE HOME

- Install smoke alarms inside and outside each sleeping area, right outside the kitchen, and on each level of your home.
- Test smoke alarms once a month by pushing the test button on each alarm. If it does not work, replace the battery and test again. If it still does not work, replace the alarm.
- Clean dust and cobwebs away from smoke alarms monthly.
- Replace the battery in all smoke alarms at least once a year.
- Replace smoke alarms that are 10 or more years old.
- Install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms following the manufacturer's instructions. It is especially important to have one near sleeping areas. Test and maintain them according to directions.
- Draw a floor plan for each level of your home. Pick two ways out of each room. Practice escaping from each room twice a year.
- Post emergency numbers for local emergency services (usually 9-1-1) and the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) near each telephone in your home.
- Plug only one plug into each electric outlet. Use only electrical equipment that is listed by Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM).
- Keep electrical appliances, sockets, and cords dry and away from water. When electrical appliances, sockets, or cords get wet, circuits can become overloaded and spark, creating a fire.
- If you must use an extension cord, use one that is rated for what it will be bringing power to—check the ratings on the cord and on the equipment or lights it is powering. Cords with higher AWG (American Wire Gauge) ratings, such as #12 or #14, are preferred.
- Run extension cords only on top of floors and carpets—not under them.
- If an adult smokes, urge smoking outdoors only. If someone smokes indoors, provide large and deep ashtrays. Make sure all smoking materials are extinguished before leaving the room.
- Matches and lighters are tools for grownups. Keep these things on high shelves, away from where young children could reach them.

- Keep combustible/flammable items and materials, such as curtains, chairs, firewood, aerosols, at least three feet away from stoves, wood stoves, portable space heaters, furnaces, hot water heaters, clothes dryers, etc.
- Check upholstered furniture after parties for ashes that could be slowly smoldering and cause a fire later.
- Keep flammable liquids, such as gasoline or kerosene, in appropriately marked safety containers outdoors, preferably in a locked shed. If they must be stored indoors, keep them away from any source of flame, such as a hot water heater or furnace. Make sure that children cannot get to them.
- Have the heating system checked by a professional once a year to make sure it is in proper working order.
- Have chimney(s) and flue(s) inspected once a year by a professional and cleaned as recommended.
- Use a metal container with a tight-fitting lid for fireplace ash removal.
- Use flashlights for emergency lighting if you lose power. Do not use candles.
- If you use candles for decorative purposes, make sure that a responsible adult is in the room at all times when the candles are lighted and that the candles are extinguished before the last adult leaves.

KITCHEN

Follow all of the “Throughout the Home” recommendations plus:

When cooking . . .

- Turn pot handles inward so they will not be easily grabbed by small children or knocked over.
- Wear short sleeves or tight sleeves. Long, loose sleeves can catch fire.
- Keep items that could attract children, such as cookies or candy, away from the stove.
- Stay in the kitchen when food is on the stove. If you have to leave for a minute, take a cooking spoon with you and hold it in your hand. This will remind you that you need to get back to the kitchen quickly.
- Use only microwave-approved containers inside a microwave—never anything made of metal or that has metal on it.

Generally in the kitchen . . .

- Keep storage areas above, below, and near the stove free of flammable/combustible items, including rags, paper towels, cleaning products, and aerosols.
- Keep appliances, like a toaster, blender, and food processor, unplugged when not in use.
- Keep a charged fire extinguisher in the kitchen. Responsible members of the family should get training from the fire department or the manufacturer in how to use it.

FAMILY/LIVING ROOM

Follow all of the “Throughout the Home” recommendations plus:

- Maintain open spaces around electronics, such as televisions, CD players, VCRs, and receivers, so they can stay cool. Do not block the air vents of these devices by placing newspapers, television listings, or other things on top of them.

- If you have a wood stove—
 - Make sure that the wood stove is installed following existing building codes and manufacturer’s instructions.
 - Check the chimney and stovepipe frequently during the heating season for creosote buildup, and clean them when necessary.
 - Keep combustible/flammable items and materials at least three feet away from the stove.
 - Use only the fuel specified for the wood stove.
 - Use a metal container with a tight-fitting lid for ash removal.

- If you have a fuel-burning heater, such as a kerosene heater—
 - Use only the proper fuel, such as K-1 kerosene.
 - Place the heater out of the path of traffic areas, such as doorways or hallways.
 - Store kerosene outdoors.
 - Use the heater in well-ventilated rooms only.
 - Turn off the heater while sleeping and make sure that someone is in the room when it is operating.
 - Keep the heater at least three feet away from combustible/flammable items or materials.
 - Dry wet clothing on a line or in a dryer, not on the heater.

- If you have a portable electric space heater—
 - Keep the heater at least three feet away from combustible/flammable items or materials.
 - If you must use an extension cord, make sure it is marked #12 or #14 AWG (American Wire Gauge).
 - Place the heater on the floor.
 - Turn off the heater when people leave the room or are sleeping.

BATHROOM

Follow all of the “Throughout the Home” recommendations plus:

- Keep electric appliances, such as hair dryers and curling irons, unplugged when not in use.

- If you have a heat lamp, make sure that it is in good working order and the bulb is kept clean. Turn it off when no one is in the bathroom.

- If you have a portable heater in the room, keep combustible/flammable items and materials, such as towels, curtains, rugs, and aerosols, at least three feet away.

BEDROOM

Follow all of the “Throughout the Home” recommendations plus:

- Never smoke in bed. Smoking in bed leads to many home fires.
- Keep portable space heaters at least three feet away from bedding and other combustible/flammable items and materials.
- If you use an electric blanket, make sure it is turned off when you get out of bed.

GARAGE, LAUNDRY ROOM, BASEMENT, UTILITY AND STORAGE AREAS

Follow all of the “Throughout the Home” recommendations plus:

- Dispose of trash and newspapers. Do not store them near a furnace, water heater, or other heat source.
- Store rags that have oil or grease on them in labeled and sealed non-glass containers (preferably metal).
- Have an electrician determine if fuses or circuit breakers are sufficient for your home’s power needs. Have a professional replace or upgrade the system if necessary.
- Keep flammable liquids away from any source of heat or flame.