

Fire Safety at Home

Protect yourself and your family with these simple fire safety tips:

- **Test Your Smoke Detector** at least once a week. Replace old batteries with fresh, high-quality alkaline batteries to keep your smoke detector going year-long. If you don't have a smoke detector in your home, get one today! Install at least one smoke detector on every level of your home, including the basement and family room and, most important, outside all bedrooms. Install your smoke detectors according to the manufacturer's instructions. A smoke detector may very well be the only thing that will wake you up in time to escape a fire in your home.
- **Make An Escape Plan Of Your Home.** Draw the floor plan on a piece of paper and make sure all members of the household understand it. Indicate the exits with an arrow going out the doors and windows. Make sure you show the meeting place outside a safe distance from the home, and that everyone in your household knows to meet there if there is a fire in your home. Make sure you have two exits for each room.
- **Practice Your Escape Plan.** Sit down with other members of your household and study the escape plan. After everyone is familiar with the plan, hold a fire drill. Have everyone lay down on their beds and push the test button of the smoke detector. Remember to feel the door for heat before opening. Everyone crawl low and exit the home and meet at the meeting place outside. Children are at double the risk of dying in a home fire because they often become scared or confused during fires. Make sure children understand that a smoke detector signals fire and that they should recognize its alarm. While this exercise may seem silly to older persons, children love it and actual practice will pay off if you ever have an emergency.
- **Bars On Bedroom Windows Must Open From The Inside** of the room. If yours do not, then have them retrofitted as soon as possible with a proper latching device. Grates covering exterior doors must also open easily. Do not use "double-keyed cylinder dead bolts" for any residential doors. These type of locks need a key on the inside to open when locked. If you misplace the key, you won't be able to get out quickly enough.
- **Matches And Lighters Are Not Toys** for children. Keep these items out of children's reach.
- **Be Careful Around Electricity.** Never stand in water or damp surfaces while operating an electrical appliance. Don't use appliances or extension cords that are damaged, have them repaired or throw them away. If you suspect that your electrical system in your home is defective, you should seek professional help with the system. Electrical problems are not a do-it-yourself project.
- **Install A Fire Extinguisher** on the wall in plain view in an exit way or next to an exit (near the kitchen is recommended). The recommended size is a 2-A:10-B.C. rated extinguisher. Secondly, know how to use it.
- **Never Leave Cooking Unattended.** Monitor hot oil carefully and heat slowly. If you must leave the cooking area, turn off the heat. If you have a grease fire on top of the stove, slide a lid over the pan to smother the flames. You may also use a fire extinguisher or sprinkle baking soda in the pan. Never use water, flour, or salt to extinguish a grease fire.
- **Store Gasoline In Approved Containers**, and don't keep more than 2 gallons on hand at any time. Containers must be vapor tight and stored in a cabinet in the garage or outside of the home well away from any source of ignition. Never keep gasoline inside of your home. Also, keep gasoline out of the reach of children.
- **Heating Equipment Is The Number One Cause Of Home Fires in America.** Make sure combustible material is at least 3 feet away from space heaters, fire places, wood burning stoves and furnaces. Inspect and clean your wood stove or chimney annually. When you leave the room, turn off space heaters, don't leave them unattended.

