

# Smoke Alarms at Home

**SMOKE ALARMS ARE A KEY PART** of a home fire escape plan. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so you can get outside quickly.

## SAFETY TIPS

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom. They should also be outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. Install alarms in the basement.
- Large homes may need extra smoke alarms.
- It is best to use interconnected smoke alarms. When one smoke alarm sounds, they all sound.
- Test all smoke alarms at least once a month. Press the test button to be sure the alarm is working.
- Current alarms on the market employ different types of technology including multi-sensing, which could include smoke and carbon monoxide combined.
- Today's smoke alarms will be more technologically advanced to respond to a multitude of fire conditions, yet mitigate false alarms.
- A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from the stove.
- People who are hard-of-hearing or deaf can use special alarms. These alarms have strobe lights and bed shakers.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.



## FACTS

- ❗ A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
- ❗ Smoke alarms should be installed inside every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level. Smoke alarms should be connected so when one sounds, they all sound. Most homes do not have this level of protection.
- ❗ Roughly 3 out of 5 fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.



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# Cooking Safety

Cooking brings family and friends together, provides an outlet for creativity and can be relaxing. But did you know that cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home injuries? By following a few safety tips you can prevent these fires.

## "COOK WITH CAUTION"

- Be on alert! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol don't use the stove or stovetop.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, boiling, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.

## If you have a small (grease) cooking fire and decide to fight the fire...

- On the stovetop, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
- For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.

## If you have any doubt about fighting a small fire...

- Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
- Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number from outside the home.



## Cooking and Kids

Have a "kid-free zone" of at least 3 feet (1 metre) around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.

## FACTS

- ! The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.
- ! Most cooking fires in the home involve the kitchen stove.



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# Candle Safety

Candles may be pretty to look at but they are a cause of home fires — and home fire deaths. Remember, a candle is an open flame, which means that it can easily ignite anything that can burn.



## "CANDLE WITH CARE"

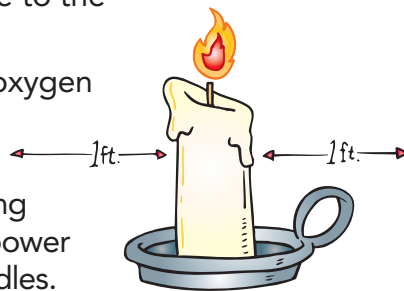
- Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Avoid the use of candles in the bedroom and other areas where people may fall asleep.
- Keep candles at least 1 foot (30 centimetres) away from anything that can burn.

Think about using flameless candles in your home. They look and smell like real candles.



## IF YOU DO BURN CANDLES, make sure that you...

- Use candle holders that are sturdy, and won't tip over easily.
- Put candle holders on a sturdy, uncluttered surface.
- Light candles carefully. Keep your hair and any loose clothing away from the flame.
- Don't burn a candle all the way down — put it out before it gets too close to the holder or container.
- Never use a candle if oxygen is used in the home.
- Have flashlights and battery-powered lighting ready to use during a power outage. Never use candles.



## Candles and Kids

Never leave a child alone in a room with a burning candle. Keep matches and lighters up high and out of children's reach, in a locked cabinet.



## FACTS

- ! **December** is the peak time of year for home candle fires.
- ! More than **one-third** of home candle fires started in the bedroom.
- ! **Two of every five** candle fires start when things that can burn are too close to the candle.



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# Heating Safety

There is something about the winter months and curling up with a good book by the fireplace. But did you know that heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths? With a few simple safety tips and precautions you can prevent most heating fires from happening.

## BE WARM AND SAFE THIS WINTER!

- Keep anything that can burn at least three-feet (one metre) away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Have a three-foot (one metre) “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer’s instructions.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month.



## Heating Equipment Smarts

**Install** wood burning stoves following manufacturer’s instructions or have a professional do the installation. All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

**Install** and maintain CO alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning. If you **smell** gas in your gas heater, do not light the appliance. Leave the home immediately and call your local fire department or gas company.



## FACT

Half of home heating fires are reported during the months of **December, January, and February.**



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# Smoking & Home Fire Safety



The place where we feel safest — at home — is where most smoking-materials structure fires, deaths, and injuries occur. Smoking materials are the leading cause of fire deaths. Smoking material fires are preventable.

## Smoking Safety

- » If you smoke, use only fire-safe cigarettes.
- » If you smoke, smoke outside. Most deaths result from fires that started in living rooms, family rooms and dens or in bedrooms.
- » Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, and other smoking materials up high out of the reach of children, in a locked cabinet.

## Put It Out

- » Use a deep, sturdy ashtray. Place it away from anything that can burn.
- » Do not discard cigarettes in vegetation such as mulch, potted plants or landscaping, peat moss, dried grasses, leaves or other things that could ignite easily.
- » Before you throw away butts and ashes, make sure they are out, and dousing in water or sand is the best way to do that.

## Smoking and Medical Oxygen

Never smoke and never allow anyone to smoke where medical oxygen is used. Medical oxygen can cause materials to ignite more easily and make fires burn at a faster rate than normal. It can make an existing fire burn faster and hotter.

## ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

Fires have occurred while e-cigarettes were being used, the battery was being charged, or the device was being transported. Battery failures have led to small explosions. Never leave charging e-cigarettes unattended. E-cigarettes should be used with caution.

## FACTS

- ! The risk of dying in a home structure fire caused by smoking materials rises with age.
- ! One out of four fatal victims of smoking-material fires is not the smoker whose cigarette started the fire.



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# Electrical Safety

Flipping a light switch. Plugging in a coffeemaker. Charging a laptop computer. These are second nature for most of us. Electricity makes our lives easier. However, we need to be cautious and keep safety in mind.



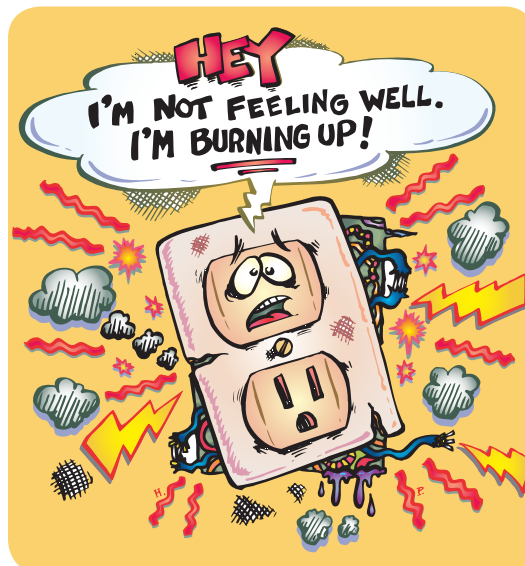
## SAFETY TIPS

- Have all electrical work done by a qualified electrician.
- When you are buying or remodeling a home, have it inspected by a qualified private inspector or in accordance with local requirements.
- Only use one heat-producing appliance (such as a coffee maker, toaster, space heater, etc.) plugged into a receptacle outlet at a time.
- Major appliances (refrigerators, dryers, washers, stoves, air conditioners, microwave ovens, etc.) should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet. Extension cords and plug strips should not be used.
- Arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) shut off electricity when a dangerous condition occurs. Consider having them installed in your home.
- Use ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to reduce the risk of shock. GFCIs shut off an electrical circuit when it becomes a shock hazard. They should be installed inside the home in bathrooms, kitchens, garages and basements. All outdoor receptacles should be GFCI protected.
- Test AFCIs and GFCIs once a month according to the manufacturer's recommendations. You do not need a flame to start a fire. Fires can start when heat builds up near things that burn. This can happen when a hot light bulb is near things that burn, such as cloth or paper, or a cord has been placed under a carpet.
- Check electrical cords to make sure they are not running across doorways or under carpets. Extension cords are intended for temporary use. Have a qualified electrician add more receptacle outlets so you don't have to use extension cords.
- Use a light bulb with the right number of watts. There should be a sticker that indicates the right number of watts.

## IMPORTANT REMINDER

Call a qualified electrician or your landlord if you have:

- Frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers
- A tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance
- Discolored or warm wall outlets
- A burning or rubbery smell coming from an appliance
- Flickering or dimming lights
- Sparks from an outlet



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# Christmas Tree Safety



As you deck the halls this holiday season, be fire smart. A small fire that spreads to a Christmas tree can grow large very quickly.



## PICKING THE TREE

- Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.



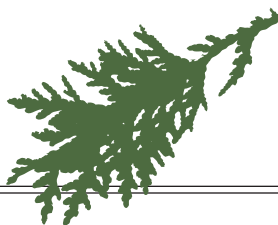
## PLACING THE TREE

- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 2" from the base of the trunk.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.



## LIGHTING THE TREE

- Use lights that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.



## After Christmas

Get rid of the tree after Christmas or when it is dry. Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home.

Check with your local community to find a recycling program.

Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

## FACTS

- ! **One** of every four home Christmas tree fires is caused by electrical problems.
- ! Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are more likely to be serious.
- ! A heat source too close to the tree causes roughly **one in every four** of the fires.

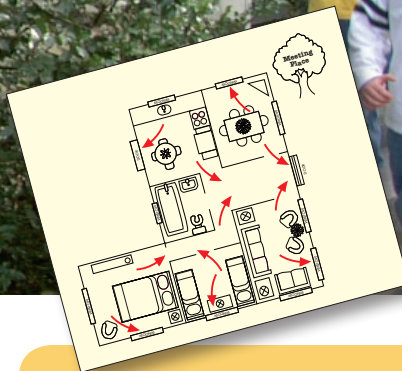


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# Escape Planning

**Plan Ahead!** If a fire breaks out in your home, you may have only a few minutes to get out safely once the smoke alarm sounds. Everyone needs to know what to do and where to go if there is a fire.



## SAFETY TIPS

- » **MAKE** a home escape plan. Draw a map of your home showing all doors and windows. Discuss the plan with everyone in your home.
- » **KNOW** at least two ways out of every room, if possible. Make sure all doors and windows leading outside open easily.
- » **HAVE** an outside meeting place (like a tree, light pole or mailbox) a safe distance from the home where everyone should meet.
- » **PRACTICE** your home fire drill at night and during the day with everyone in your home, twice a year.
- » **PRACTICE** using different ways out.
- » **TEACH** children how to escape on their own in case you can't help them.
- » **CLOSE** doors behind you as you leave.

## IF THE ALARM SOUNDS...

- » If the smoke alarm sounds, **GET OUT AND STAY OUT**. Never go back inside for people or pets.
- » If you have to escape through smoke, **GET LOW AND GO** under the smoke to your way out.
- » **CALL** the fire department from outside your home.

## FACTS

- ! A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire. Install smoke alarms inside every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area. Install alarms on every level of the home. Smoke alarms should be interconnected. When one smoke alarm sounds, they all sound.
- ! According to an NFPA survey, only **one of every three** American households have actually developed and practiced a home fire escape plan.
- ! While **71%** of Americans have an escape plan in case of a fire, only **47%** of those have practiced it.
- ! **One-third** of American households who made an estimate thought they would have at least 6 minutes before a fire in their home would become life-threatening. The time available is often less. And only **8%** said their first thought on hearing a smoke alarm would be to get out!



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