

# Fire Safety and Prevention

*Each year fire claims the lives of more than 4,000 Americans, injures tens of thousands, and causes billions of dollars' worth of damage. The United States Fire Administration believes fire problems can be reduced by teaching people to recognize the hazards. By following some of the outlined precautionary steps, individuals can greatly reduce their chances of becoming a fire casualty.*

## Heating Safety

- Have your chimney or wood stove inspected and cleaned annually by a certified chimney specialist.
- Keep combustibles such as curtains, chairs, firewood, etc., at least three feet away from fireplace or wood stove.
- Make sure your fireplace(s) have a sturdy screen to catch sparks.
- Be sure that every portable heater is placed away from curtains, bedding, furniture.
- Turn off portable heaters when family members leave the house or are sleeping.
- Have your furnace serviced by a professional once a year.

## Cooking Hazards

- Keep areas near the stove free of towels, potholders, curtains, etc.
- Always stay in the kitchen when food is cooking on the stove, especially when the burner is turned to a high setting.
- Have at least one fire extinguisher for use on all types of fires.
- DO NOT use water to douse a flaming pot. Smother with cover or baking soda or use fire extinguisher.

## Electrical Hazards

- Use electrical extension cords wisely and don't overload them.
- Check electrical cords for good condition, no cracks or frayed areas.
- Unplug appliances when not in use (ie: toasters, blenders, hairdryers, etc.) and cover outlets not being used.

## Flammable Liquids

- Flammable liquids include gasoline, acetone, benzene, lacquer thinner, kerosene, alcohol, turpentine, contact cements, paint thinner and charcoal lighter fluid. The most dangerous of all is gasoline.
- Keep all flammable liquids stored in properly labeled, tightly closed, non-glass containers.
- Keep flammable liquids stored away from heaters, furnaces, water heaters, ranges and other gas appliances.
- If not in active use, keep lawn mowers and all gas-powered appliances stored empty.

## Smoke Alarms & Home Fire Escape

- Have smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement, and outside each sleeping area.
- Test your smoke detectors on a monthly basis and keep them in working condition at all times.
- Replace batteries in smoke detectors at least annually.
- Make sure the batteries in your smoke detectors are connected at all times.
- Your smoke detector should have a distinct warning signal that can be heard whether awake or asleep.
- You need have an escape plan and an alternate escape plan.
- You should rehearse/practice the escape plans periodically and have a place where everyone meets outside to assure everyone got out safely.

## Other

- Keep the thermostat on your water heater set between 135° and 130°F.
- Inspect and clean your dryer vent pipe each fall.
- If you use candles, make sure that they and their holders are in good condition before each use and they are located away from combustible materials.
- Keep important documents such as: deeds, wills, marriage license, etc., stored in a fire resistant safe in your home or a safety deposit box outside the home.

## In Case of Fire

- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers posted at each phone.
- In case of fire, it's a good practice to keep water in plastic bottles in bedroom closets to dampen cloths for face protection during escape.

Sources: US Fire Administration: [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov) | US Consumer Product Safety Commission: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

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