

# A Reminder About Fire Safety in the Home

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In spite of our nation's unparalleled prosperity, the United States has the highest fire death and injury rate in the world. Each year, more than a half a million residential fires result in more than 4,000 deaths and over \$4 billion in property loss. To put it in perspective, fires "in the home" kill more people in our country each year than floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, lightning, and accidental (gun) shootings combined.

While fire does not get the same level of "air time" on the evening news, you should know that the threat to you and your family is very real. Every 80 seconds, a family—somewhere in the United States—is impacted by a residential fire. And, every two hours, someone dies from a fire in his or her home. Most frightening, is the fact that the majority of these fire deaths occur between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., when everyone is "safely" in bed.



A little planning and effort can help minimize your family's risk. And, when you do it as a family, it can be a rewarding and fun experience. Following is a list of suggestions for you and your family. Obviously, some items on the list will apply to your circumstances, while other items may not. Here are some suggestions ...

## **Fire prevention/safety suggestions based on your type of residence:**

- Make sure the fire department can find and access your home—make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street.
- Understand the unique fire hazards found in apartments, condominiums, assisted living centers, and other multi-family housing units and develop an appropriate fire safety action plan.
- Recognize the unique fire hazards associated with manufactured housing and, if you live in manufactured housing, develop an appropriate fire safety action plan.

## **Fire and safety suggestions for the inside of your residence:**

- Develop and practice a home fire escape plan.
- Install, test, and maintain smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Install and maintain fire extinguishers.
- Practice fire safety in the kitchen.
- Practice good housekeeping and common sense.
- Know the fire and safety hazards associated with electricity and plan for their mitigation and elimination where feasible.

- Know the causes of and hazards associated with carbon monoxide (CO) and what you can do to minimize or eliminate those hazards.
- Recognize the unique fire hazards associated with the use of candles and practice candle safety.

**Suggestions based on unique or seasonal fire hazards:**

- Keep combustibles away from space heaters, fireplaces, and wood stoves.
- Recognize the fire hazards associated with the Christmas season and what you can do to minimize or eliminate them.

**Fire safety suggestions based on unique circumstances:**

- Recognize the fire hazards associated with children and practice child fire safety.
- Recognize the fire hazards faced by senior citizens and those who are disabled, and provide for their fire safety.
- Recognize the unique fire hazards found in the garage and practice fire safety in the garage.
- Develop and maintain a fire safety zone around your home to protect it and your family from wildfire.
- Replace your wood shingle roof with a composition roof.
- Install a sprinkler system.



Over the next several months, we will cover several of these topics in more detail, including a more in-depth overview of the problem, practical tips and checklists to guide and assist you in your action planning, and a list of information resources and contacts in case you want to conduct additional research on a specific topic. In addition, we may examine other fire and related safety issues that are critical to you and your family such as:

**Fire safety in hotels, buildings, and other public places:**

- On vacation.
- Away from home on business.
- At work.
- At school.
- In public buildings.
- At the lake.
- At a mall, concert, amusement park, or other crowded public area.

- Auto and travel safety.

#### **An overview of first aid:**

- Choking and effective intervention.
- Burn prevention and treatment.
- Home illness and injury treatment.
- Fall prevention.
- Poison prevention and safety.

#### **An overview of other safety issues in the home:**

- Lawn and garden safety.
- Bicycle and toy safety.
- Dangerous gases and vapors in the home.
- Safe handling of firearms and other dangerous equipment.
- Safety involving the weather and natural hazards.
- Home improvement safety.
- Pet safety.



Your home is a place of refuge for you and your family from the many dangers that you face in today's world. Unfortunately, health, safety, fire, and other hazards are found in all homes. Fortunately, you have the power to act as an agent for prevention and to be better prepared to respond in the event of an emergency. We look forward to working with you as an active partner in this effort by providing accurate and practical information to assist in your planning.

#### **References:**

- National Fire Protection Association at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org).
- Fire Safety Council at [www.firesafecouncil.org](http://www.firesafecouncil.org).
- First Alert at [www.firstalert.com](http://www.firstalert.com).
- Phoenix Fire Department at [www.ci.phoenix.az.us/FIRE](http://www.ci.phoenix.az.us/FIRE).