

Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are an essential item to have installed in your home.

A smoke alarm can literally mean the difference between life or death. Here are some tips provided by the National Fire Protection Association regarding smoke alarm basics.

INSTALLING SMOKE ALARMS

According to the NFPA.org, smoke alarms should be installed in each bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. Install a smoke alarm in a den or living room area if no bedrooms are present in the home.

The NFPA says you should also have smoke alarms installed in stairways and basements. Smoke alarms in the basement should be installed on the ceiling at the bottom of the stairs leading to the next room.

Smoke alarms in stairs should be installed at the top of the stairs leading up to the next floor.

Smoke alarms in kitchens should be installed at least 10 feet away from appliances to avoid false alarms.

Avoid installing smoke alarms near windows, doors, or air ducts. If your house or an appliance is smoking, you want to make sure the smoke alarm can detect the smoke without interference from wind or a draft blowing the smoke away from it.



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TESTING SMOKE ALARMS

You don't want to assume the smoke alarm is always working. Malfunctions can happen, so the NFPA advises you to test smoke alarms at least once a month to make

sure they are working. See the smoke alarm's manufacturer for instructions on maintenance and testing.

It is important for all family and friends in your home to recognize and understand dif-

ferent alarms in your home. You should always have family present while testing so they can recognize the distinct tone your smoke alarm makes.

See the smoke alarm label

for the kind of battery your smoke alarms have. Some smoke alarms come with non-replaceable 10-year batteries and others come with regular batteries that will need to be changed frequently.

Fire Safety for Kids

Teaching your kids about fire safety is very important, not only because it could save their lives but because it can also save your home and possessions.

Here are some tips on teaching kids fire safety from the American Red Cross.

TEACH KIDS EARLY

According to the U.S Fire Administration, 300 people are killed and \$280 million in property is destroyed each year as the result of children playing with fire.

It's important to teach young kids the dangers of fire. RedCross.org advises parents to keep lighters, matches and other ignitable substances in a secured location out of children's reach.

To be extra safe, you can use lighters with child resistance features. Consider using flameless candles.

Teach your kids at a young age that fire is something they should never play with and tell them about the effects fire can have on their home and family.

FLAMELESS OPTIONS

One of the best ways of fire-proofing your home is to keep away flammable items and appliances. If you have a gas-powered stove, look into replacing with an electric

stove. An electric stove works by heating coils inside a cooking surface. Although it may be cost a little more than gas, you will benefit in the fact it is a safe option to have around smaller kids.

If you enjoy candles, invest in flameless candles or scent warmers. Instead of using a flame, scent warmers use a light bulb to heat up and melt scented wax. This can be cheaper for your home

because the wax cools and hardens when not turned on. You can end up saving money in the long run.

HAVE A PLAN

Fires can still happen even if

you teach your kids about fire safety.

To be sure your family knows what to do in case of an emergency, plan and practice what to do if and when a fire starts in your home.



If a Fire Starts

There are a few things your whole family should know in case a fire breaks out in your home.

This list provided by RedCross.org ensures your family will have a plan of action if a fire breaks out.

- Make sure each member of your family can locate and properly use a fire extinguisher. Make sure your fire extinguisher is up to date and replaced, if need be.
- Remember if a fire breaks out in your home to get out, stay out and call 911 or your local emergency phone number.
- If a fire breaks out in one section of your home yell “Fire!” to alert family members who may be in other sections of your home.
- If smoke, heat or fire block you from escaping your home, use a wet towel to cover the bottom of the door and keep it closed. Call the fire department or 911, open a window and use a brightly colored item to signal for help.

You should come up with a few escape plans with your family, as well as measures to take so each person knows what to do and how to get themselves out of danger.

Create a meeting spot you all can go to once each family member has escaped the fire. Make sure it is a spot outside and away from your home. Each family member should



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know to escape directly to this spot and wait there until help arrives.

If you are escaping, keep in

mind to never open doors that are warm to the touch. Doing this can cause the fire to spread more quickly to differ-

ent parts of the home.

If you must escape out of a room or hallway filled with smoke, remember warm air

and smoke rises, and crawl under the smoke to safety. Close doors behind you to trap smoke or fire behind you.

Pet Fire Safety

Your pet is as much of the family as anyone else, and assuring their safety during a fire is essential.

Here are some steps to take, from RedCross.org.

FAMILY PLAN

RedCross.org says the best way to protect your pets from fire is to include them in your family plan. This includes having their own plan and protective kit. Also have a plan for when you aren't home. Arrange a safe place your pet can roam without the need to worry whether they could cause a fire. This could be a laundry or utility room. If your pet is perfectly house trained, maybe consider a room in the house or a bathroom. If whether permits and you make the right arrangements to keep the pet comfortable, then keeping it outside in the backyard or on a patio is good plan.

RedCross.org says when you plan your escape from fire, you should plan to have your pets with you.

PREVENT PET FIRES

It is important to make sure you pet proof your home so that your belongings and your family are kept safe. Pets such as cats and dogs can be very curious animals and can knock over candles or other flammable appliances.

Make sure you extinguish



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any open flames around the house, especially if you have pets such as cats that are able to climb onto kitchen cabinets and drawers. Take no risks

when it comes to open flames around the house.

According to RedCross.org and the National Fire Protective Association, a stove

or cooking top is the number one piece of equipment involved in your pet starting a fire. RedCross.org recommends removing stove knobs

or placing protective covers before you leave your home.

Use these tips to help ensure your pets and family will be safe.

Cooking Safety Tips

Cooking is a great way to bring family together, laugh and share timeless memories. Cooking can also be very dangerous and a fire hazard if you aren't being careful.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and injuries.

BE CAREFUL, BE AWARE

Whether you have an electrical or gas stove, you need to be very careful when cooking. If you aren't feeling well, intoxicated or sleepy, you should not be cooking. Fires aren't the only dangers in the kitchen. You also have sharp knives and hard surfaces to be aware in the kitchen.

Never get too careless in the kitchen and leave something on the stovetop cooking, frying or boiling. The NFPA says if you have to leave for any reason, turn off the stove.

Make sure to keep all flammable items such as wood utensils, oven mitts, packaging or towels away from the stovetop.

GREASE FIRE

Grease fires can spread easily if you don't know how to act swiftly and carefully. Most



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people don't even know what to do in case a grease fire occurs. Here are some tips to educate you from the NFPA.

The best way to put out a grease fire in your kitchen is

to smother the flames. DO NOT pour water on a grease fire, you will only make it worse.

The first step to always take when putting out a grease fire

is to cut off the power to the stove top or the oven. Use a lid or a baking sheet to cover to smother the flames, and leave the lid in place until the pan is cooled.

If a fire is ever too much to handle, the best advice the NFPA can give you is to get out, close the door behind you to contain the fire and call 911.

Home Fire Prevention Equipment

There is plenty of equipment you can purchase and store in your home to protect you and your family from fire.



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Here's a list of fire prevention equipment to help protect you. Tips provided by the U.S Fire Administration.

THE BASICS

One of the most simple ways you can help prevent fire and protect your family from fires is to buy the basics in fire equipment. The basics include installing smoke alarms in

every sleeping room and kitchen around your house and installing a home sprinkler system in your house.

Smoke alarms can help you detect the fire before it really begins by detecting the smoke a small fire can emit.

A home sprinkler system can battle a fire if it gets too big for you to handle after the smoke alarm detects the fire.

Another simple way to help prevent and protect you from fires is to keep and make sure you know how to use a home fire extinguisher. Make sure each resident of the home knows where it is located and how to use it. It is recommended the fire extinguisher is placed in the kitchen, where, according to USFA, 50% of fires in the home begin.

FIRE SAFETY KIT

Once you have taken steps to fortify your home to fight fires, it is time to take the next step and fortify your family.

Create a kit to keep somewhere in your house that can help you fight a fire, aid a burned family member or help you escape.

First aid kits are the number one essential item to keep in

your fire safety kit. Having a first aid kit around will help take care of minor injuries as a result of the fire.

The last piece of fire safety equipment to keep in your kit is a fire blanket. Fire blankets are very effective at smothering fires before they can spread. Keep a fire blanket around in your kitchen to smother any flames.



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Campfire Safety

Fire safety should not only be taken seriously at home but should be prioritized in nature while you are camping with friends and family.

Here are some tips to keep in mind to prioritize fire safety while enjoying the great outdoors.

BUILDING A CAMPFIRE

Most campsites provide a pit for campers to have their fires but if they do not, here are some tips on how to appropriately build a safe

campfire.

Take your shovel and dig out a pit in an open area away from any flammable debris such as branches, leaves or other possible hazards. Once you have dug a wide and deep enough pit, place rocks around the outside of the pit to separate the pit from anything that can catch on fire.

Once the rocks and the pit are in place, grab a handful of dried leaves, grass or twigs that can easily catch on fire.

As the fire builds, place bigger pieces of wood to keep the fire burning steadily. It's important to remember to never leave the fire unattended, not even for one minute. Even the smallest breeze

can send an ember in the wrong direction and start a fire. If you are leaving the fire for a short period of time and intend to come back later, cover the fire with dirt.

KEEP WATER AROUND

It is important to never start a campfire if you do not have a bucket of water and a shovel near you. If for any reason something goes wrong and a small fire breaks out, you can douse the fire in

water and throw dirt to smother it.

If nothing goes wrong starting the fire, the bucket of water and shovel are useful for putting out the fire at the end of the night. Never leave the fire open at the end of the night when everyone goes to bed.

It also could be a good idea to water the ground a few feet around the fire in case any embers happen to jump outside the fire.