



## Safety Tips for the home

Planning and practicing a home fire prevention and escape plan can save your life.

In order to react fast to fire, you should draw a diagram of your house and plan your escape from each room, to familiarize yourself with it. However, since the majority of fire deaths occur while you are sleeping, you should practice your plan at night as well, get down on your hands and knees with a flash light and crawl to safety. For more information visit <http://www.nfpa.org/>

### Kitchen:

- Use a temperature-controlled electric skillet or deep-fryer for frying.
- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Use appropriate cooking appliances and keep clean.
- Keep a pot cover nearby to "put a lid on it" in the event of a fire.
- Avoid loose long sleeves when cooking.
- Check kettles and toasters for damaged electrical cords and thermostats.
- Use appliances that have an automatic shut-off.
- Keep a timer handy to remind when oven and burners should be switched off.
- If medications cause drowsiness -do not use cooking appliances.
- For safety and insurance purposes wood stoves must be installed by a professional.

### Living Room:

- Always use a fire screen making sure it is the correct size for the fireplace opening.
- Do not overload electrical outlets or use extension cords in place of additional outlets.
- Smokers should check furniture for fallen cigarettes or embers which can smolder undetected for several hours before bursting into flames.
- Ensure careful use of smoking materials and extinguish in water before disposal.
- Never leave cigarettes unattended in an ashtray.
- Use safety ashtrays with a double rim and deep center.
- Keep matches, lighters and lit candles out of reach of children.
- Never leave lit candles unattended.

### **Bedroom:**

- Install at least one smoke alarm outside each sleeping area. For extra protection install a smoke alarm in every bedroom.
- Test smoke alarms at least monthly.
- Change smoke alarm batteries every year.
- Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.
- Check electrical appliances regularly - electric blankets, heating pads, curling irons, radios, televisions, irons.
- Bedrooms should be non-smoking areas.

### **Basement and Attic:**

- Remove all combustible and flammable materials from the basement and attic.
- Store gasoline in well-ventilated areas - not in basements or confined areas.
- Do not store propane indoors.
- Use only approved containers to store and transport gasoline
- Have a thorough yearly maintenance check carried out on all aspects of the furnace by a professional.
- When replacing an old furnace consult a professional to determine the most safe, economical and efficient system for your home.
- Chimneys should be cleaned at least once a year.

### **Garage and Workshop:**

- Flammable materials - thinners, gasoline, paints, industrial cleaners - should be stored neatly in approved containers and away from ignition sources.
- Do not smoke or leave matches or lighters in the garage or workshop.
- Install and be knowledgeable in the use of the appropriate fire extinguisher for the area.
- Keep the area clean - remove garbage, paper products, oily rags and wood shavings regularly.

### **Killing force of fire:**

- The smoke is black, and very thick, it is impossible to see.
- You have no time for indecision, an entire house can be completely involved in five minutes.
- Most people are killed by smoke inhalation not the flame of the fire.
- The heat of the fire is extremely intense and can kill you instantly.
- Statistics show that 78 percent of deaths from fire occur in the home and most of these fatal fires occur between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. when occupants are sleeping.

### To create your personal escape plan, do the following:

- Install smoke alarms on every level - outside the bedroom, near the kitchen and garage. Keep clean and dust-free. Check smoke alarms monthly. (Some fire departments and manufacturers say weekly.) Replace batteries yearly and alarms every 10 years.
- Draw a floor plan of all levels of your home with normal and emergency exits including two from each bedroom. Designate a safe meeting place outside and someone to call 911 from a neighbour's home.
- Practice the plan, including crawling out with eyes closed (heavy smoke impairs breathing and sight; staying close to the floor increases chances of escape). If needed practice using escape ladders.
- Small children unable to escape can learn to open their windows and wave an article of clothing to attract attention. Instruct them to wait at the window until someone comes and to never hide from the fire. Discuss with a fire department official whether an escape ladder would be appropriate.
- Sleep with doors closed. If children are frightened, parents can close doors after the children fall asleep and use a room monitor to hear them in the night.
- If awakened by a smoke alarm or a fire, instruct family members to feel the door for heat and check air at bottom. If you don't smell smoke and the air is cool, kneel and open the door slowly, turning your face away from the opening. If smoke is present or the door is hot, use another exit.
- Purchase an A-B-C fire extinguisher and learn how to use it by remembering the acronym PASS. PULL the pin, AIM the extinguisher, SQUEEZE or press the handle, SWEEP side to side at the base of the fire. (The rating is based on the fuel. A is a wood or paper fire; B is caused by flammable liquids; C is an electrical fire.)