

- Keep compost piles at least 10 feet away from any building
- Keep your yard clear of debris and combustible rubbish
- Keep gutters free of leaves and debris, and place mesh screening on your fireplace or stove chimney to prevent sparks from escaping

### Plan an Escape

If fire breaks out in your home, you must get out fast. Do not stay in a burning home to dial 911 – do that from a safe location. Getting out will be easier if you have planned an escape route and know where to go. Practice a plan of escape with your family at least twice a year.

If you must exit through smoke, clean air will be several inches off the floor. Get down on your hands and knees and crawl to the nearest safe exit. Choose a meeting place outside where everyone should gather. Once you are out, stay out!

Everyone should know the rule of STOP, DROP and ROLL. If your clothes catch fire, don't run! Stop where you are, drop to the ground, and roll over and over to smother the flames. Cover your face with your hands to protect your face and lungs.

If someone gets burned, immediately place the wound in cool water for 10 to 15 minutes to ease the pain. If the burn blisters or chars, see a doctor immediately.

*Using proper fire safety measures and having a rehearsed escape plan which is familiar to all members of your household can help save your family and your home.*

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## In-Home Fire Safety

An overwhelming number of fires occur annually in homes. If a fire happens in your home, your chances of survival will depend on how quickly and safely you are able to get out. Here are some suggestions to help you plan ahead in the event of fire, and better yet, to avoid the threat of fire in your home.



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# In-Home Fire Safety

## Detection

Smoke alarms are inexpensive to purchase, and can double your chances of survival. An existing smoke alarm should be replaced after ten years of service, or as recommended by the manufacturer. Smoke alarms:



- Can be purchased at hardware or discount stores
- Should be installed on each level of your home and outside each sleeping area
- Should be tested monthly, kept free of dust and have new batteries annually if not hard-wired into the electrical system

## Kitchen Fires

Careless cooking is the number one cause of house fires. Be sure the stove is turned off when you finish cooking. If grease catches fire, carefully slide a lid over the pan to smother the flames, then turn off the burner. Never use water on a grease fire. If the fire is in the oven or broiler, turn off the heat and keep the door tightly closed to stop the flaming. Other prevention tips include:

- Don't leave cooking food unattended
- Keep a fire extinguisher near the stove
- Keep the pot handles turned inward on the stovetop so pots cannot be knocked off accidentally
- Keep flammables (towels, paper, plastic utensils, curtains) away from the stovetop
- Do not wear loose or dangling clothing when cooking

## Electrical Fires

Electrical problems are another major cause of home fires. If an appliance smokes, sparks or emits an unusual smell, have it replaced or professionally repaired.

Don't tamper with your fuse box. Fuses and circuit breakers protect you from fire. Symptoms of an overloaded circuit are dimmed lights, a poor TV picture or reduced performance from appliances and power tools. If you suspect a problem, call a licensed electrician to add new circuits or rewire for more capacity. Some other safety tips:

- Replace any electrical cord that is cracked or frayed
- Don't run electrical cords under rugs or over nails
- Use only grounding extensions and receptacles for three-wire equipment
- Avoid overloading outlets or extension cords
- Unplug appliances (toaster, can opener, coffee maker) when not in use
- Take care not to damage concealed wiring when drilling holes or driving nails into walls
- Clean lint from dryers after each use, and from outside vents frequently

## Heating Equipment

Home heating systems are safe when properly operated and maintained. Poor housekeeping, clogged or faulty chimneys and dirty or faulty equipment increase the hazard of fire. Avoid heating equipment problems by:



- Having your heating system inspected and maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations
- Placing portable heaters away from furniture and drapes and where they cannot easily be knocked over
- Checking fireplace and wood-burning stove flues and chimneys prior to every heating season
- Using a sturdy firescreen at your fireplace

## Children and Fires

Tragically, children set over 20,000 house fires every year.

Children are naturally curious about fire, and the majority who start fires by playing with lighters or matches are ages 3 or 4. Take the mystery out of fire play by teaching your children that fire is a tool for adults, not a toy, and that if they find matches they should tell an adult immediately. If you have a child who repeatedly plays with fire, call your fire department. They can help.



## Outdoor Safety

Taking care in your yard can make your home and family safer:

- Use outdoor barbecue grills away from the walls of your house, deck rails, furniture or dry vegetation
- Stack firewood away from heat and never on or under wooden decks
- Minimize use of mulch near the sides of the house, and be sure any mulch used is moist, especially in the summer. Do not use woodchips near the sides of the house