

Knowledge is the best fire extinguisher



**HOME SAFETY
CHALLENGE**



Emergency phone numbers

Emergency 911

Fire Department (Non-Emergency) _____

Law Enforcement (Non-Emergency) _____

Doctor _____

Pediatrician _____

Hospital _____

Dentist _____

Veterinarian _____

Gas Company _____

Electrical Company _____

Plumber _____

Neighbor _____

Family Member _____

Pet Poison Helpline 1-800-213-6680

Poison Control 1-800-222-1222

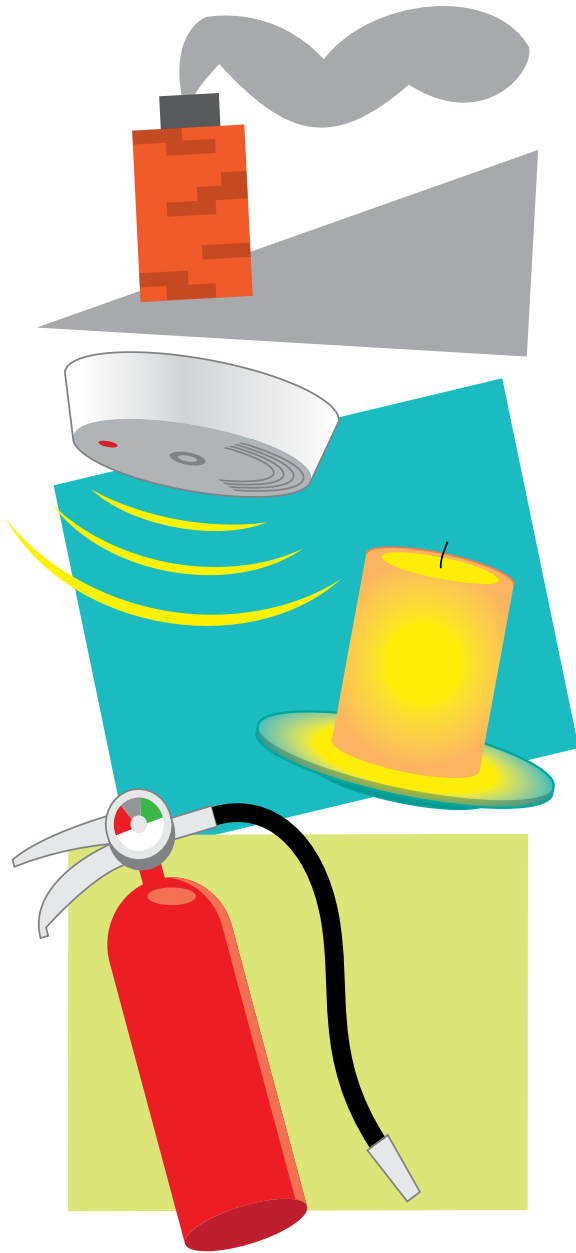
Protect your family and loved ones.



**HOME SAFETY
CHALLENGE**

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The dangers and what you can do to reduce risks



Imagine seeing your home filling with thick black smoke, and flames destroying your possessions and blocking your escape. Thinking about it now and taking action can prevent it from happening to you.

Dangers

Smoking

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), smoking materials are the leading cause of fire deaths in the United States. You should be aware of the fire risks associated with smoking.

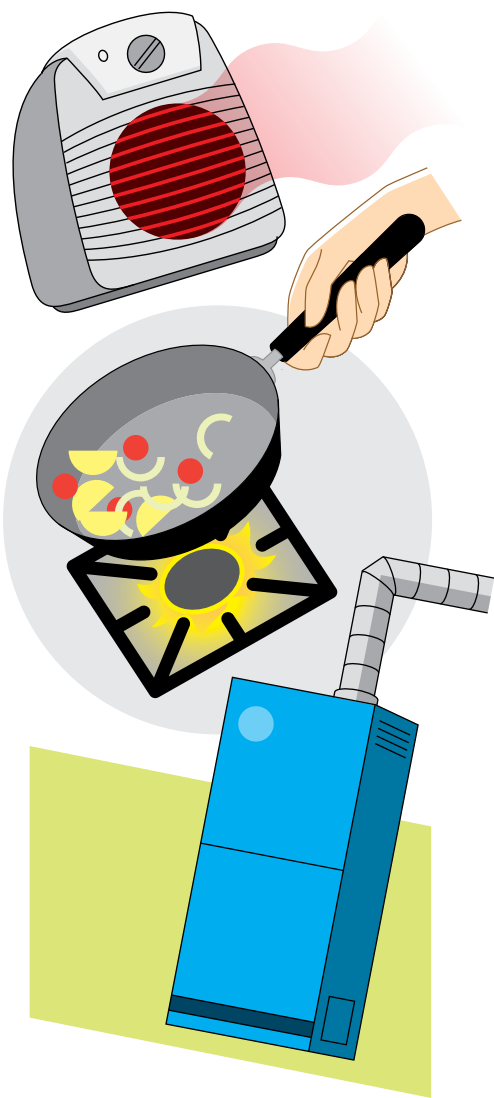
- If you smoke, use only fire-standard compliant cigarettes.
- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- Do not discard cigarettes in vegetation, potted plants or landscaping, peat moss, dried grasses, mulch, leaves, and other similar items which can easily catch fire.
- Use deep, sturdy ashtrays. Never empty smoking material directly into a trash can. Discard butts and ashes in water or sand.
- Most deadly fires happen when people are drowsy, medicated or intoxicated.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Never smoke where medical oxygen is used.
- Before going to bed, check for smoldering cigarette butts where people were smoking in your home.

Candles

- Battery-operated, flameless candles are the safest choice.
- Always use a flashlight – not a candle – for emergency lighting.
- Avoid using candles around children and pets. They are often fascinated by the flame.
- If you choose to use candles, place them in sturdy, safe candleholders that won't burn.
- Candles should be at least three feet from anything that can burn.
- Extinguish candles when you leave a room or go to sleep.
- Never use candles in the bedroom.



The Dan



Cooking

- Always stay in the kitchen while cooking on the stovetop. The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.
- Create a three-foot safety zone around your stove and grill, keeping all young children and pets at least three feet away while you are cooking.
- Keep the top of the stove clean. Anything that can burn – including oven mitts, food boxes, towels – should be at least three feet from the stovetop and oven.
- Turn all pot handles to the side to prevent them from being knocked or pulled down.
- Clean the vents above the stove once a month to prevent grease build up.
- Wear tight-fitting or short sleeves when cooking.
- If a fire starts in a pan on the stove, do not move the pan or put water on it! Carefully slide a lid across the top of the pan, turn the burner off, and call the fire department.
- Oil and water don't mix. Never pour water on a grease fire. It will make the oil explode and rapidly spread fire throughout the room.

Space heaters

- Always place space heaters on a steady surface and at least three feet away from anything that can burn.
- A space heater should have a switch that will shut the heater off instantly if it tips over or gets too hot.

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And what you can do to reduce risks

Fireplace

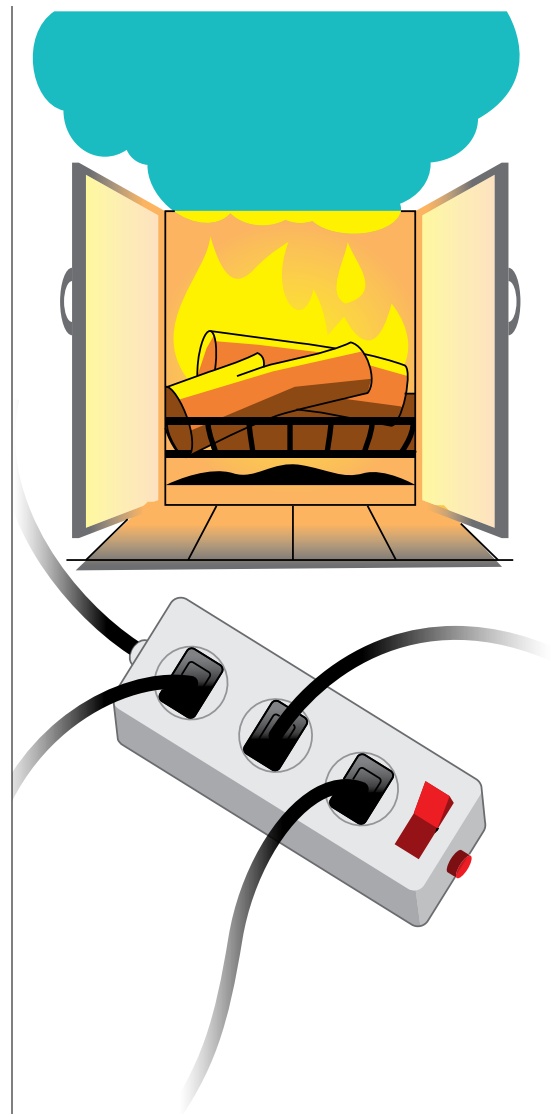
- Burn only dry, seasoned wood in fireplaces and wood stoves - not trash or paper.
- Have chimneys inspected and cleaned by a professional at least once a year.
- Dispose of ashes in a metal, airtight container until cooled. Fires from ashes have occurred days after improper disposal.
- Keep furniture at least three feet from the fireplace.

Furnace

- Have the furnace professionally inspected annually, or according to manufacturer's recommendations.
- Change furnace filters according to manufacturer's recommendations.

Electrical

- Extension cords are not meant to replace permanent wiring. Use surge protectors when multiple plugs are needed.
- Unplug small appliances (e.g., coffee pots, toasters) when not in use.
- Replace damaged cords.
- Halogen lamps operate at a high temperature, thereby posing fire and burn hazards. They should be used with added caution.
- Follow wattage recommendations for every light fixture.
- Electrical cords should not be placed under rugs or across doorways.
- All electrical outlets and light switches should have cover plates.
- Fuse boxes should be accessible and clearly labeled. The metal door should be kept closed.
- All outlets near water should be GFCI protected.



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Outside and garage

- Keep things that burn easily (debris, wood, leaves, trash, etc.) away from home.
- Outside outlets should have electrical outlet covers.
- Avoid carbon monoxide build-up; do not start car until garage door is fully open. Never leave the car running in garage.
- Store flammable liquids in safety containers in a metal cabinet with doors – away from heat sources and exits. Refuel any engines outside in fresh air.
- Propane/charcoal grills should be located outdoors on a noncombustible surface. Grills should not be used under overhangs and should be kept at least six feet from home during use.
- Living areas and attached garages should be separated by a solid core door or a metal fire-rated door.
- Drywall provides limited fire protection. Ensure that there are no openings in the drywall that separate an attached garage and living space.
- Ensure that the safety reverse function of the automatic garage door opener is functional and properly adjusted.
- House numbers should be a different color than the house and large enough to read from the street. Consider using reflective numbers and illuminating them with a light.
- Trees should be trimmed so they do not touch or hang over the roof to prevent fire spread.

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And what you can do to reduce risks

Crime

- Most crimes are the result of an opportunity. Don't give thieves an easy way to steal your property. Install and maintain proper outdoor lighting, including motion detectors at front and back of home.
- All exterior doors, including the garage door leading to the house, should be equipped with deadbolt locks.
- Break-resistant glass should be installed in all doors and in side panels next to doors.
- All garage windows should be covered.
- All plantings/shrubbery in front of windows should be kept trimmed to eliminate hiding places.
- All windows should have locks installed and should be kept locked.
- Sliding doors should be secured with a locking mechanism. In addition, place a bar or dowel into the track.
- Install timers on interior lights and set to turn lights on when no one is home.
- Always lock your car doors. It does not matter if the car is parked in the driveway, garage, or on the street. Remove valuables from vehicles.
- Firearms and ammunition should be secured and stored separately.
- Keep your garage door opener out of sight.



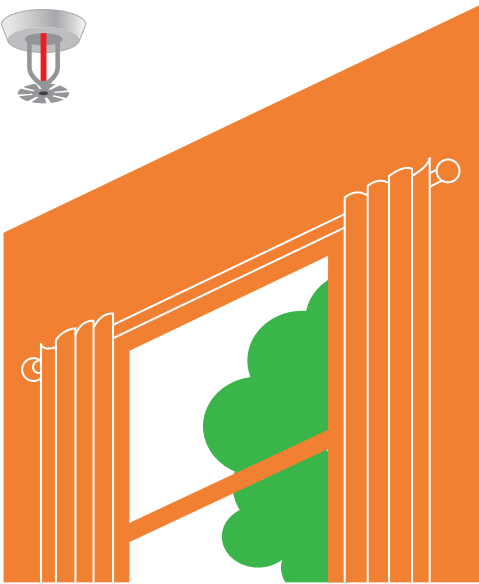
Other steps to take to become safer



Prevention is the best way to reduce the likelihood of a fire in your home. There are several things you can do to ensure your family's safety, should a fire occur.

Home fire sprinklers

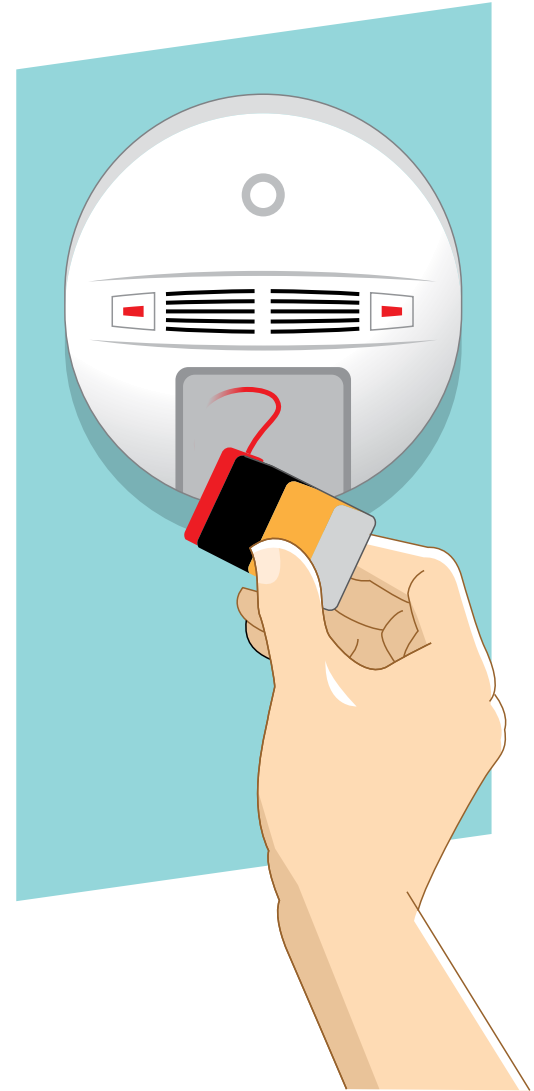
- Home fire sprinklers work along with smoke alarms to save lives. NFPA data shows that home fire sprinklers reduce the risk of dying in a home fire by 80%.
- Sprinklers protect lives and property by keeping fires small. Because the sprinkler system reacts quickly, it can dramatically reduce the heat, flames, and smoke produced in a fire, allowing your family more time to escape safely.
- Home fire sprinklers can be installed in new or existing homes. If you are remodeling or building a home, install a home fire sprinkler system.
- It is especially important to install a home fire sprinkler system in homes with persons who may not be able to get out without help, such as those with disabilities, young children, or older adults.
- Have a qualified contractor install your home fire sprinkler system. Maintain it according to local fire safety regulations.



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Install smoke alarms

- Working smoke alarms save lives, cutting the risk of dying in a home fire in half. Smoke alarms should be installed and maintained in every home.
- A smoke alarm detects smoke and provides warning at the early stages of a fire. This gives you time to escape.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, outside of each bedroom and in each bedroom.
- When you replace interconnected smoke alarms, replace them all with the same brand.
- Dust or vacuum smoke alarms regularly. Follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.
- Smoke alarms must be tested monthly by pressing on the "TEST" button.
- Change the battery at least once a year (unless you have 10-year lithium battery alarms). An easy way to remember is to change the batteries when you change your clocks for daylight savings time.
- Replace smoke alarms every 10 years or according to manufacturer's instructions.



Become



Make an escape plan

1. Spend a few minutes thinking about how you would get out if there were a fire.
2. Practice your escape plan with all the occupants of the home at least twice a year.
3. Establish a meeting place in front of the house and be certain that the entire family knows to meet there in the event of a fire.
4. Make sure everyone in the house wakes up to the sound of the smoke alarm. Children, older adults, and people with disabilities may need assistance to wake up and get out. Ensure that someone will help them.
5. Determine two ways out of every sleeping area. Consider purchasing fire escape ladders to be used to exit from upper level bedroom windows.
6. Sleep with your door closed. If a fire occurs, a closed door can keep out smoke and heat giving you time to get out your second exit.
7. Feel the door before entering the hallway. If the door is hot, use second exit. If it is cool, stay low and open the door slowly. If it is safe, go out and to your meeting place.
8. Keep your escape route clear. Avoid clutter. If you have not used an item in the last year, consider giving it away or discarding it.

Safer

Other steps to take to become safer

What to do in a fire

If there's a fire ... Get Out

Stay Out

CALL 9-1-1

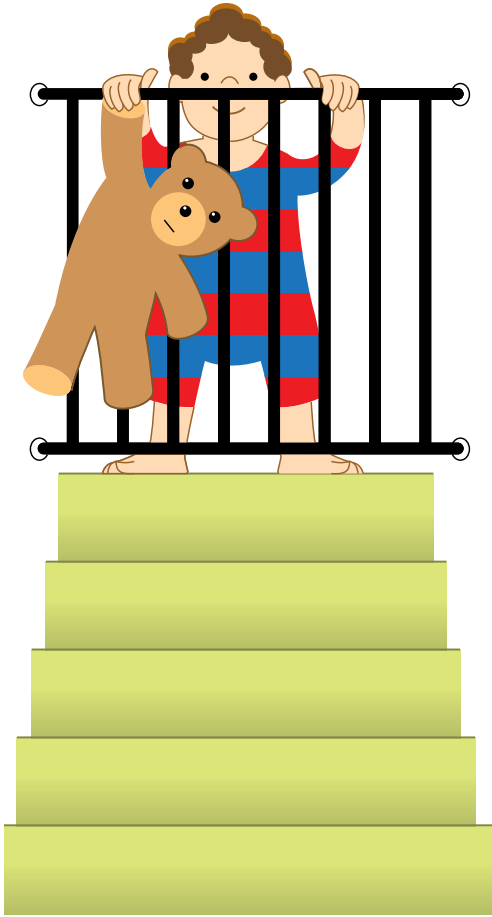
- Keep calm and act quickly! Don't delay—get out! Don't waste time gathering things.
- Put your fire escape plan into action.
- “Keep low” where the air is clearer and cooler.
- Remember to use the stairs. Never use elevators in a fire!
- Don't go back in. Many people die attempting to rescue pets or collect valuables. Call 9-1-1 from outside and wait at your meeting place for the fire department to arrive.
- If escaping out a window is not an option, keep the door closed. Put blankets around the bottom of the door to block smoke. Close any heating/air conditioning ducts. Turn on the light. Open the window to attract help. Call 9-1-1.

If your clothes catch fire

- **STOP. DROP** to the ground. **ROLL** over to put the fire out.
- Cover your face with your hands to keep the fire from your nose and your eyes.
- Use cool water to treat burns. Cover burns with a clean, dry cloth.
- Seek medical help for severe burns.



Special



Special advice for parents and caregivers

Unintended injury is the leading cause of death in children. Parents and caregivers have the responsibility to take the steps necessary to make their homes as safe as possible for children.

Make your home safer for children

- Install gates at the top and bottom of stairs in homes with young children to prevent falls.
- Install window guards in upper level windows to prevent children from falling out.
- Keep hot foods and liquids away from table and counter edges to prevent burns.
- Always check water temperature before putting a child in a bathtub. Consider installing an anti-scald device (which reduces the water flow to a trickle as the water temperature nears 120 degrees Fahrenheit) on tub faucets and showerheads. Adjust the thermostat setting on your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or less.
- Put outlet guards on sockets so children can't stick objects into them.
- Keep all medications and cleaning supplies locked up.
- If children are in the home, do not leave the bathroom while filling the bathtub.

Advice

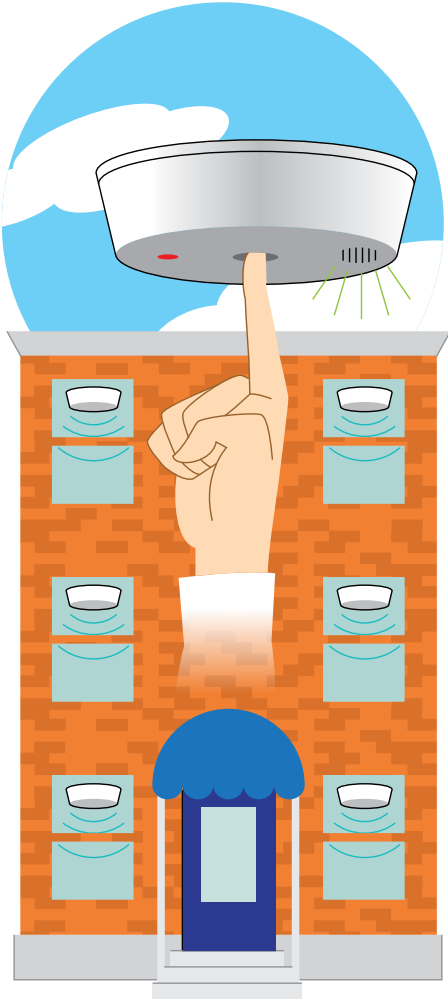
Teach children about the dangers of fire

It's crucial to be aware that children can start a fire in moments. Children are often fascinated by flames, candles, matches, and lighters. Teach your children that fire is an adult tool, not a child's toy.

- Keep cigarettes, matches, lighters, and other smoking material in a locked cabinet out of the reach (and sight) of children.
- Encourage children to tell an adult if they find matches or lighters.
- Teach children to not touch matches or lighters.
- If you know children who may be lighting fires, contact the fire department for help.
- Teach children that they need to stay away from stoves and other heat sources.
- Set a good example for behaving safely around fires such as bonfires, barbeque grills, fireplaces, and campfires.
- Practice your fire escape plan regularly so children know how to get out if there is a fire.



Special



Special advice for renters

Renting a home does not mean you should ignore fire prevention. Make sure to understand and practice your escape route. Work with your landlord to ensure that potential fire hazards are eliminated.

- The landlord must provide you with working smoke alarms. However, it is your responsibility to maintain them on a regular basis and to report smoke alarms that don't work.
- Plan and practice your fire escape plan. Know how many doors it is to your escape route. Do not use the elevator.
- Refrain from smoking and grilling on apartment balconies.

Advice

Special advice for older adults

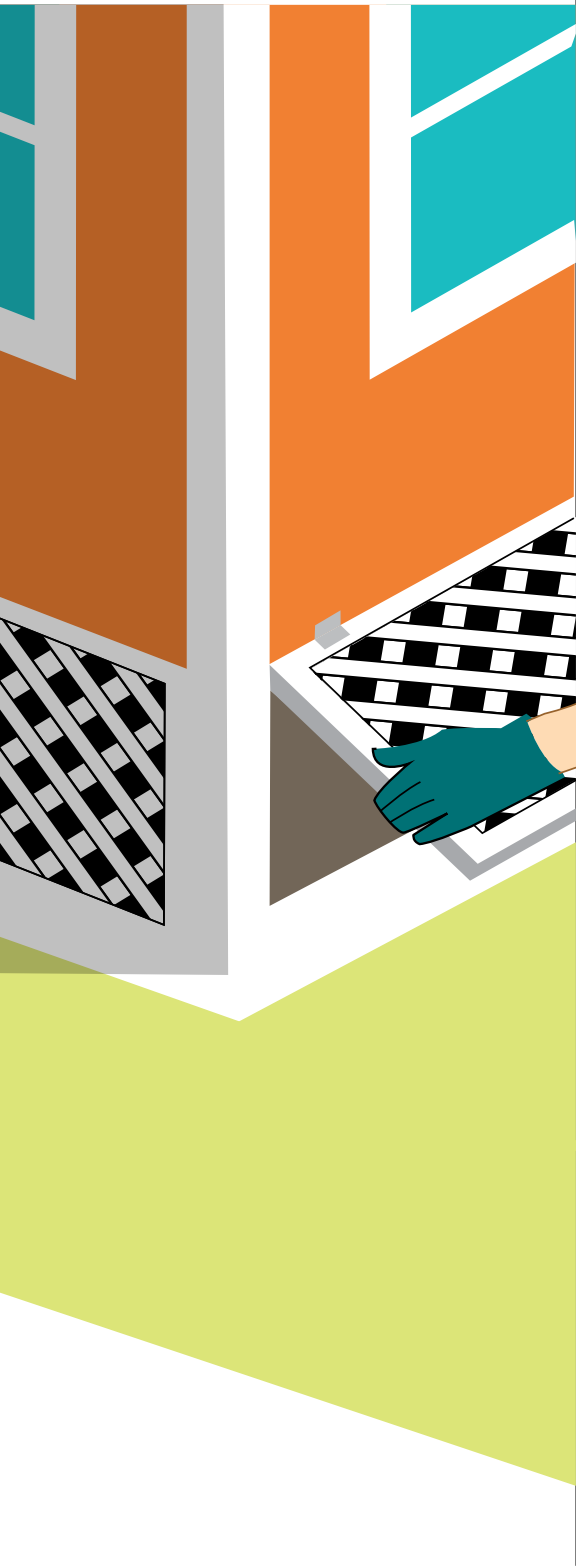
Older adults are at special risk for serious injury and death from fires and falls. You need to be alert to the dangers, and take the necessary precautions to stay safe. Maintaining regular contact with family members, neighbors, and/or friends is an important part of staying safe.

Fall safety

- Falls in the home are especially dangerous for older adults. Take precautions to minimize the risk of falling.
- Have your health care provider review your medicines and their potential side effects.
- Have your vision checked.
- Begin a regular exercise program to stay strong and flexible.
- Keep stairs clear of packages, boxes, clutter. Items left on the stairs present a tripping hazard.
- Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape or a rug liner to keep the rugs from slipping.
- Keep frequently used items in cabinets you can reach easily without a step stool.
- Install bathtub/shower and toilet grab bars.
- Use non-slip mats in the bathroom and on bathtub/shower floors.
- Ensure that snow and ice are cleared from walkways.
- Improve the lighting in your home.
- Install handrails and appropriate lighting on all staircases.



Special



Special advice for those living in manufactured homes

Manufactured homes, especially those that are older, can pose safety hazards. Be sure to follow the same safety guidelines recommended for other types of dwellings, by having working smoke alarms, attending to cooking, and implementing the three-foot rule around heat sources.

Heat tape

Heat tape is professionally wrapped around the incoming water pipes of your home's water supply. To protect heat tape from freezing in the winter, have the system professionally checked every autumn prior to plugging in the tape. After the last chance of frost, unplug to save electricity. Keep the skirting intact around the home to prevent small animals from getting underneath the home and chewing on the heat tape. If the tape fails and the pipes freeze, contact a professional.

Advice

Other lifesaving information

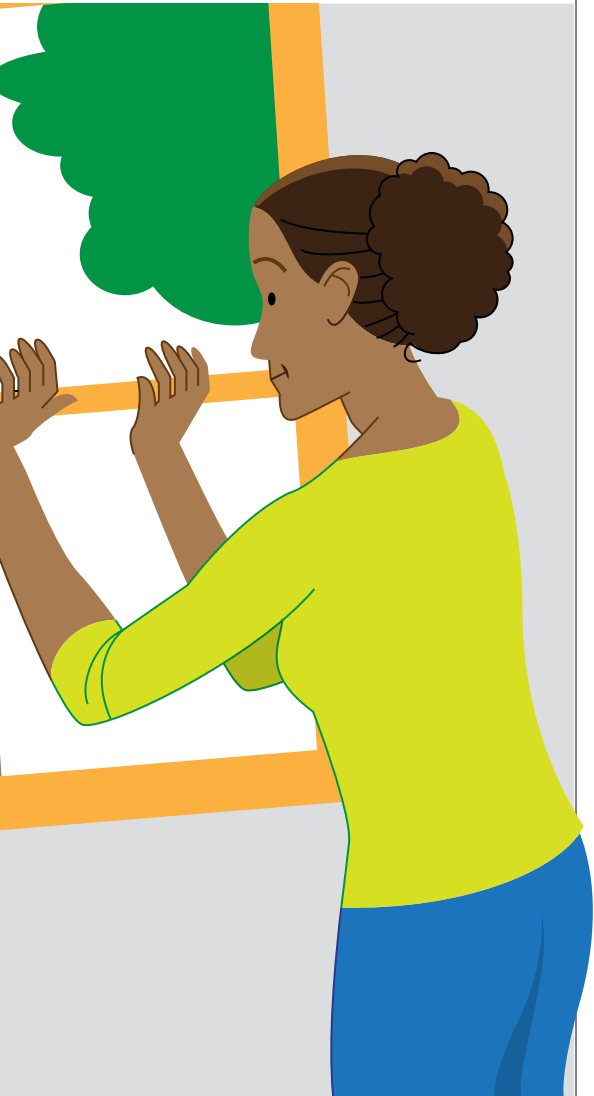
Prevention and the availability of various alarms, devices, and emergency procedures can dramatically enhance your family's chances of survival.

Carbon monoxide alarms

- Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, and toxic gas. It can kill you before you are aware that it is in your home. Hundreds of people die from carbon monoxide each year.
- CO can come from gas-fired appliances, charcoal grills, wood-burning fireplaces and stoves, and motor vehicles.
- Symptoms of CO poisoning may include headache, nausea, and drowsiness.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms within 10 feet of all sleeping areas. Follow manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Use digital carbon monoxide alarms that are plugged in and feature a battery in case your power goes out.
- Avoid buying combination carbon monoxide/smoke alarms.
- Test CO alarms once a month.
- Replace your alarm every 5-7 years (dated on the back) or according to manufacturer's instructions. The sensors in CO alarms have limited life.



Special



What actions do I take if my CO alarm sounds?

If no one is feeling ill:

- Silence the alarm.
- Turn off all appliances and sources of combustion.
- Call a qualified professional and/or the gas company to investigate the source of the possible CO buildup.

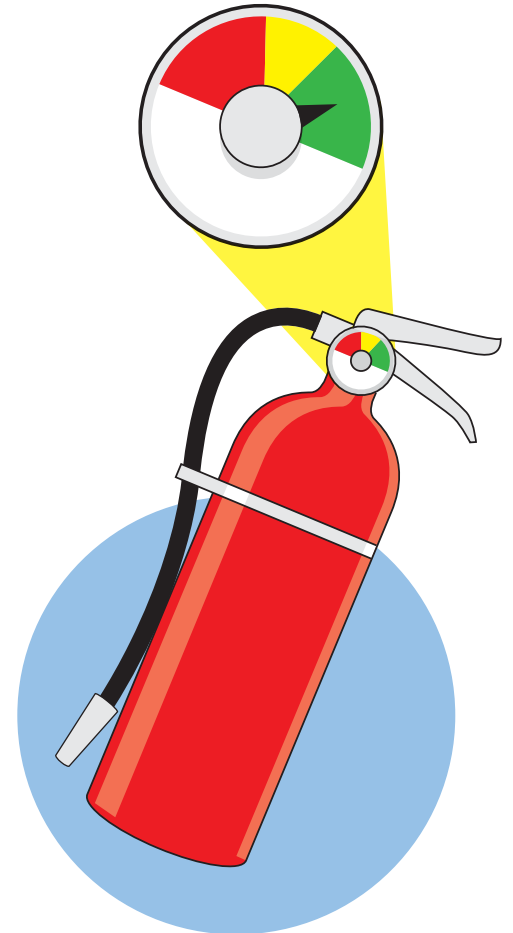
If people are experiencing flu-like symptoms:

- Get out of the house immediately.
- Call 9-1-1.
- Remain at a fresh air location until emergency personnel arrive to assist you.

Advice

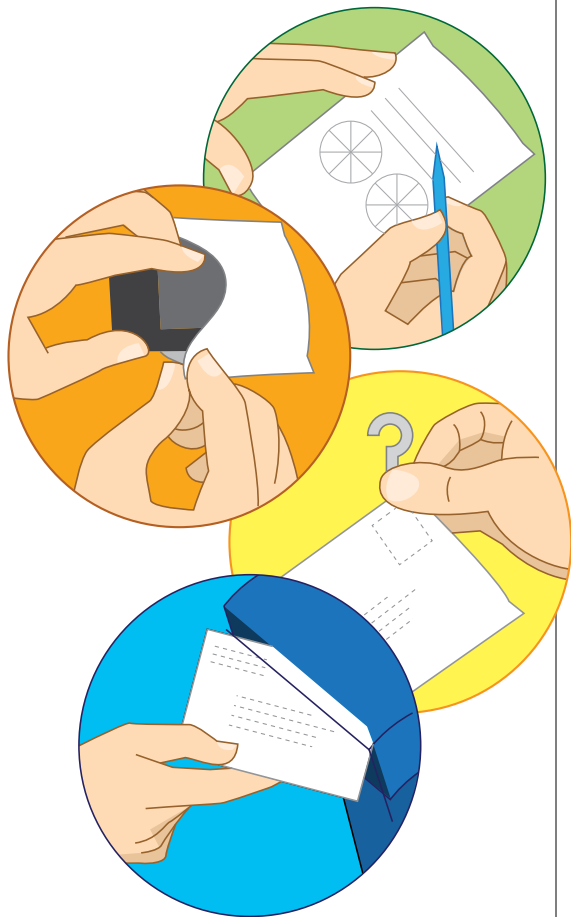
Fire extinguishers

- Consider buying **5 lb. ABC multi-purpose extinguishers** for your home.
- Place extinguishers near exits in the kitchen and the garage.
- Check to make sure the dial is in the “green” indicating that it has pressure. Have the extinguisher checked and recharged by a professional every six years.
- Use the PASS system (**P**ull the pin, **A**im at the base of the fire, **S**queeze the handle, and **S**weep side to side). Always keep an exit to your back so you do not get trapped, and make sure 9-1-1 has been called before attempting to extinguish the fire.



Safety

Safety devices and training



Radon testing

- Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer in non-smokers.
- The Minnesota Department of Health recommends that you test your home for the presence of radon.
- Purchase a radon kit from your neighborhood hardware store, or online.
- Carefully read and follow radon test kit instructions.
- If test results show elevated levels of radon, contact the Minnesota Department of Health for mitigation referral.

CPR/First Aid training

- Knowing CPR and First Aid can and does save lives.
- Take a CPR course to learn this lifesaving technique.
- Contact your fire department, The Red Cross, or The American Heart Association for information.

Devices

Poison Control

1-800-222-1222 (Call Center open 24/7)

- If someone has been poisoned, call immediately. Follow their instructions.
- Put all medicines in a locked cabinet.
- Put child safety latches on all areas where household chemicals are kept—e.g. under sinks, garage cabinets, etc.
- Don't use empty medicine containers as toys.



“Fire is Everyone’s Fight.”



www.MNhomesafetychallenge.org

The information presented in the Home Safety Challenge is offered as a community service, and is designed to promote fire and life safety. Individual circumstances may require additional or different precautions, and common sense should always be exercised. The content is based on recommendations and guidelines established by fire and life safety education professionals.