

# Fire Prevention in the Home

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## SMOKE DETECTORS

**Install** smoke detectors on every level of your home and inside sleeping areas. Mount high on ceilings or walls - remember, smoke rises. Ceiling-mounted smoke alarms should be installed at least 4" away from the nearest wall; wall-mounted alarms installed 4" - 12" away from the ceiling. On vaulted ceilings, mount the alarm at the highest point.

**Ensure** that every member of the household can hear and recognize the sound of alarm and knows how to react immediately.

**Test** smoke detectors once per month using test button, and replace batteries at least once per year.

**Maintain** your smoke detector in good working order. Regular dusting or vacuuming can help keep it working properly. Don't paint your smoke alarm - paint or other decorations can prevent the smoke detector from working properly.

**Replace** your smoke alarms at least once every 10 years.

## FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

**Purchase** multi-purpose fire extinguishers (ABC Type) that can be used for extinguishing all types of fires.

**Learn** how to operate an extinguisher before there is an emergency.

**Pull** the pin, hold the extinguisher away from you and release the locking mechanism.

**Aim low.** Point the nozzle at the base or lowest point of the fire.

**Squeeze** the lever slowly and evenly.

**Sweep** the nozzle from side to side.

**Install** fire extinguishers close to an exit in the kitchen, garage and workshop.

**Use** only if the fire is small, everyone else has exited the building, the fire department has been called or is being called, and the room has not filled with smoke.

## PLAN YOUR ESCAPE

**Teach** your family members to sleep with their bedroom doors closed. A closed door will hold smoke and heat out and give you precious seconds to escape.

**Plan** your escape routes. Always plan at least two ways out of every room. If one way is blocked by fire (door), use alternative route (window).

**Practice.** Hold family meetings to practice escape drills. Instruct family to stay low in smoke, where the air is better. Teach them how to check doors with the back of their hands; if the door is hot don't open it, if cool open the door slowly and look before proceeding. Instruct members never to re-enter the house after they have escaped for any reason. All family members should agree on a meeting place outside of the home, and proceed there immediately after exiting the home.

## KITCHEN SAFETY

**Never** leave food cooking on a stove top unattended. Food cooking in oven should be checked often.

**Never** store combustibles on or in close proximity to cooking areas. (i.e. potholders, towels, rags drapes, food packages, etc.)

**Never** overload kitchen electrical outlets, and don't use appliances with frayed or damaged cords.

**Always** turn pot handles inward so they can't be bumped and children can't grab them.

**Always** have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen should fire occur.

**Always** wear short, close fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose fitting clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire.

**Fire in pot/grease fire.** Don't throw water or household items onto grease fire - splashing grease may increase fire size. Turn off burner on stove, and cover pot with lid.

**Fire in oven.** Don't open oven door - flames will flow out open door burning you, and possible spreading fire. Turn off heat and call fire department.

**Fire in microwave.** Don't open door. Unplug the microwave and call the fire department.

**Clean** exhaust hood and duct over the stove regularly. Clean grease spills on surfaces after they have cooled.

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY

**Extension cords.** It is better not to use extension cords. If you must use them, ensure they are the proper size for the appliance or machinery, that they are not frayed or damaged.

amaged, that the cord is not placed under carpeting or across doorways where they can be damaged. Use one extension cord per appliance or piece of machinery - never use plug adapters to hook multiple items to a single extension cord.

**Replace** frayed or damaged cords on all electrical devices. Never run cords under carpets or across doorways when they will become damaged.

**Check** outlets, switches, and appliances often. If they feel excessively warm, that may indicate an overload - turn off or unplug and have checked by a qualified electrician. Look for loose wall receptacles, loose wires, or loose lighting fixtures - sparking means you have waited too long.

**Avoid** overloading circuits. Consider plugging in one high-wattage appliance at a time into a receptacle outlet. The use of multiple outlet extensions that allow several plugs is discouraged.

**Use** plastic safety caps on outlets in homes where there are children or small animals.

**Watch** for signals of an overload on your electrical system. Dimming lights when an appliance is turned on, a shrinking TV picture, slow heating appliances, flickering lights, or fuses blowing frequently are signs of a significant problem that should be checked by a qualified electrician as soon as possible.