

Household Safety

Each year, thousands of people are injured in home fires in the U.S. Most fire-related deaths are caused by smoke inhalation of the toxic gases produced by fires. Fires and burns are a leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths among children ages 14 and younger.

FAMILY ESCAPE PLAN

- In the event of a fire, it is important to get out of the house fast. A good family escape plan should include:
- Two escape routes from each room (in case one exit becomes blocked by the fire)
- A chain ladder for every upstairs bedroom
- A drawn floor plan of your home with arrows showing escape routes
- Repeated practice so you and your family know the escape plan
- An agreed-on meeting place outside the house

FIRE AND BURN PREVENTION

- Keep flammable products, such as matches, lighters, and candles, locked and out of the reach of children.
- Never play with matches or lighters in front of children.
- Don't smoke or allow others to smoke in your home. Make sure that all smoking products are completely out.
- Install smoke alarms in bedrooms, outside sleeping areas, and on every level of your home. Test monthly and replace every 10 years.
- Keep and maintain your fire extinguishers.
- Maintain heating equipment, regularly have your furnace inspected, and turn off and unplug supplemental heaters when sleeping.
- Only burn logs in the fireplace with a fireplace screen in place to protect against sparks. Have your chimney cleaned and inspected yearly.
- Be vigilant with candles. Never place lit candles in a window where blinds or curtains could catch fire.
- Develop several fire escape plans from each room in the house and practice them regularly with your family.
- Make sure items, such as clothing or blankets, do not cover lamps that are turned on.
- Teach fire and burn safety behavior to your children. Role model safe behavior for your children.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Electric shocks from appliances and electrical outlets and cords can burn the skin and cause tissue and nerve damage. To prevent electrical shock, take these precautions:

- Keep electrical appliances away from sinks and bathtubs.
- Make sure that your electrical appliances are approved by Underwriters Laboratories, which is indicated on the box or appliance itself.
- Use ground fault circuit interrupters in areas near water, such as the kitchen and bathroom, and outdoors.
- Unplug electrical cords that aren't in use. Keep electrical cords out of reach of children.

- Cover unused electrical outlets with safety covers.
- Turn off electrical equipment that is not being used.
- Teach children about electrical safety in an age-appropriate manner. Role model the safe behavior you teach them.

PREVENTION

- Set your water heater at 120 degrees F/48 degrees C or just below the medium setting.
- Use a thermometer to test the water coming out of your bath water tap.
- Run your hand through bath water to test for hot spots.
- Use back burners and turn pot handles toward the back of the stove so children cannot pull them down.
- Use oven mitts when cooking or handling hot food and drinks.
- Stir and test food cooked in the microwave before serving. Open heated containers away from you from back front.
- Keep children away from the stove when cooking by using a safety gate for younger children and marking with tape a 3-foot “no-kid zone” for older children.
- Keep hot drinks away from the edge of tables and counters and avoid using tablecloths and placemats.
- Use a “travel mug” with a tight-fitting lid for all hot drinks.
- Never hold or carry a child while you have a hot drink in your hand.