

Home Fire Safety Checklist

Nearly 7,500 people die from fires each year in the United States. Another 310,000 people are injured by fire and may spend months or years in hospitals recovering from burns. About two-thirds of U.S. fire deaths occur in residences. Most home fires are attributable to carelessness with smoking, cooking, heating, children playing, accumulated trash, and improper maintenance of electrical appliances the major causes.

Each family member can assume some responsibility for reducing home fire hazards. If you have questions about home fire safety, call your local fire department. Fire officials can offer numerous tips and advice on how to make your residence more fire safe. This home fire safety checklist can serve as a guide to reducing fire hazards in your residence.



Careless Smoking

Yes No

- () () 1. Does your family avoid placing lighted cigarettes on furniture edges or counter tops in your home?
- () () 2. Is a "no smoking in bed" rule followed and enforced in your household?
- () () 3. Do family members refrain from dropping burned matches or cigarettes into waste baskets?
- () () 4. Are sofas and chairs checked for burning tobacco embers before retiring at night when someone has been smoking?

- () () 5. Do you take steps to discourage people in your home from falling asleep while smoking?
- () () 6. Are matches and cigarette lighters kept out of children's reach?

Natural Gas and Electrical Hazards

Yes No

- () () 1. Does your family avoid running extension cords under rugs, through doorways, or hanging over nails where they can become frayed and broken?
- () () 2. Are furnaces, water heaters, and dryers properly vented? (If unsure, ask your service person, building official, or fire marshal.)

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- () () 3. Do you turn down or shut off cooking appliances when called away while preparing a meal? (phone calls, doorbell, children playing, etc.)
- () () 4. Are portable electric heaters kept a safe distance from beds, curtains, walls, and other flammable materials?
- () () 5. When electrical fuses burn out or circuit breakers trip, is the cause always determined and corrected before replacing the fuse or resetting the breaker?
- () () 6. Are kitchen window curtains and towels kept a safe distance from cook stove burners?
- () () 7. Do you refrain from placing pennies, foil, or wire in fuse boxes?
- () () 8. Are furnaces, water heaters, dryers, washers, refrigerators, freezers, and other appliances cleaned and inspected at least once a year?
- () () 9. If you live in an older home, has a licensed electrician inspected your wiring?
- () () 10. Are frayed electrical appliance cords replaced immediately?
- () () 11. If your home is in an exposed location or on a hill, have lightning rods been installed?
- () () 12. Do furnaces, water heaters, and dryers carry U. L. (Underwriters Laboratory) or A.G.A. (American Gas Association) approval?

Wood Burners and Chimneys

Yes No

- () () 1. Is the chimney for your woodstove or fireplace inspected and cleaned every year?
- () () 2. Do you discourage the burning of "green" or unseasoned wood in your wood burner?

- () () 3. Are combustibles, including TV sets, sofas, chairs, and other furniture, kept a minimum of three feet distance from the wood burner?
- () () 4. Do you keep children from throwing objects into the wood burner?
- () () 5. Is the fire screen always in place when using the fireplace or wood stove?
- () () 6. Do you absolutely forbid using gasoline, diesel fuel, or charcoal lighter to start or rekindle a wood fire?
- () () 7. Are ashes properly placed in metal containers and immediately taken outdoors when cleaning the wood burner?
- () () 8. Do you discourage throwing large quantities of combustibles like paper, cardboard, or dry nutshells into the wood burner all at once?
- () () 9. Has your wood burner been installed with proper clearances according to local building codes?

Flammable Liquids

Yes No

- () () 1. Is adequate ventilation provided when using paint, varnish, or solvents?
- () () 2. Are lighted cigarettes or candles extinguished before using aerosol sprays or flammable liquids?
- () () 3. Do you have a family rule prohibiting use of gasoline as a cleaning agent?
- () () 4. Are small gasoline engines allowed to cool before refueling and always refueled outdoors?
- () () 5. Are flammable liquids like gasoline, solvents, and paint stored outside the home and only in metal containers?

Clothing Fires

Yes No

- () () 1. Are fire resistant fabrics selected for children's sleepwear?
- () () 2. Do you avoid wearing fuzzy, sheer, lacy, or loose clothing near open fires, cook stoves, or ovens?
- () () 3. Do all family members know how to stop, drop, and roll on the ground or wrap in a rug or blanket in case their clothing catches on fire?

Outside Burning

Yes No

- () () 1. If you burn rubbish outside your home, is your incinerator at least 50 feet from any building?
- () () 2. Do you avoid burning rubbish on windy days?
- () () 3. Is your incinerator covered with a screen to prevent escape of burning papers and embers?
- () () 4. Do you keep weeds and dry grass trimmed around the home and outside buildings, and tree limbs trimmed back around roof chimneys and stove pipes?

Fire Safety Practices

Yes No

- () () 1. Is your home equipped with an adequate number of U.L. approved heat or smoke detectors?
- () () 2. Are detectors tested periodically?
- () () 3. Has a fire escape plan been established, discussed, and practiced with each family member? (National Safety Council recommends a family fire drill every 6 months.)

- () () 4. Are emergency fire and police numbers clearly visible on each phone of the home?

- () () 5. Is a portable fire extinguisher (multi-purpose "ABC" dry chemical) available on each floor of the house, in the garage, and the family car?

- () () 6. Is a fire extinguisher or container of baking soda or table salt conveniently located in the kitchen in case of grease fires?

- () () 7. Do your neighbors have emergency fire and police phone numbers posted on their phones in case you would need to use them?

- () () 8. Are fire extinguishers inspected each month?

- () () 9. Has each family member been instructed on how to use a fire extinguisher?

- () () 10. Are rope ladders or other escape devices available in upstairs rooms to allow escape through bedroom windows in case of fire?

- () () 11. Is each family member educated to first get people out and then call the fire department before attempting to extinguish a large fire alone?

Emergency Procedures

Yes No

- () () 1. Do all family members know how to report a fire to the fire department by speaking calmly into the phone and giving their name, exact address, and type of fire?

- () () 2. Do you have a prearranged landmark outside the home where all family members should meet in case of fire?

- () () 3. Does each family member know how to properly check closed doors to detect fire on the other side?

- () () 4. When a fire occurs and is put out, is the fire department always promptly notified so they can determine if the fire has been properly extinguished?

- () () 5. If a fire has occurred and is extinguished, will all burned materials (pillows, sofa pads, rugs, etc.) be completely removed from the home and placed outside on the lawn?

Completing this checklist evidences your concern for the fire safety of your family and home. Each No answer indicates potential hazard and you should take steps to correct the problem immediately.

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