



Fire Prevention Canada

Working with the private and public sectors to achieve
fire safety through education

ONE OF THE MAJOR CAUSES OF HOME FIRES, ESPECIALLY DURING THE WINTER AND CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

Candles provide great warmth and ambiance to any home. It is easy to forget that such a calming artifact is an open flame that can reach 1,400 °C. Most candle fires begin in the bedroom – with a mattress or bedding cited as the first item to ignite – except during the holidays, when more people use candles precariously too close to decorations. Furniture and plastics are also cited as the first items in the home to catch fire from a lit candle.

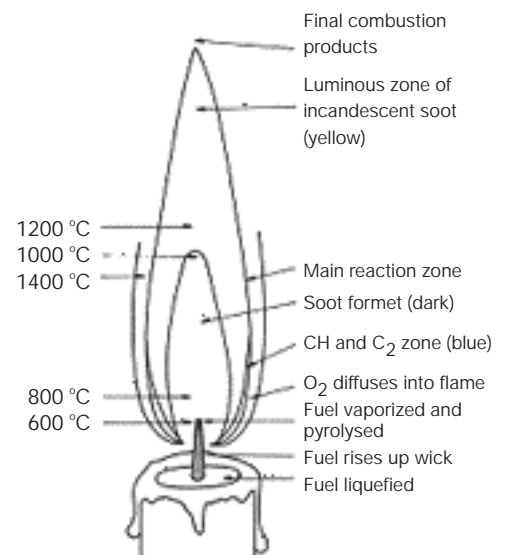
Statistics reveal that the most common causes of fire are

- Leaving candles unattended.
- Falling asleep while a candle is lit.
- Using candles for light.
- Candles located too close to burnable objects.
- Candles knocked over by children, pets or sudden drafts.

Safety Tips

- Extinguish candles when leaving the room or going to sleep.
- Keep lit candles away from items that can catch fire such as toys, clothing, books, curtains, Christmas trees and paper decorations.
- Place candles in sturdy, burn-resistant containers that won't tip over and are big enough to collect dripping wax.
- Don't place lit candles near windows, where blinds or curtains may close or blow over them.
- Don't use candles in high traffic areas where children or pets could knock them over.
- Never let candles burn out completely. Extinguish them when they get to within two inches of the holder or decorative material.
- Never leave children or pets alone in a room with lit candles.
- Do not allow older children to light candles in their bedrooms. A forgotten candle or an accident is all it takes to start a fire.
- During power outages, exercise caution when using candles as a light source. Many destructive fires start when potential fire hazards go unnoticed in the dark.
- Never use a candle for light when fuelling equipment such as a camp fuel heater or lantern.

How hot is a candle flame?



Safety Tips (Cont'd)

- Keep candle wicks short at all times. Trim the wick to one-quarter inch (6.4 mm).
- Be wary of buying novelty candles. Avoid candles surrounded by flammable paint, paper, dried flowers, or breakable/meltable containers.
- Extinguish taper and pillar candles when they burn to within two inches of the holder, and container candles before the last half-inch of wax begins to melt.
- When buying or using novelty candles, try to determine if they pose a potential fire hazard (if they contain a combustible component for instance). If they do, or if you suspect that they might, inform your local fire department.
- Use extreme caution when carrying a lit candle, holding it well away from your clothes and any combustibles that may be along your path.

The Law

- There are no legal standards or regulations for candles, including their make, design, safety features, location or use.
- Candles are not tested by a testing agency for safety before they are put on the market for you to buy.



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FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Read the instructions on your extinguisher for proper use.

Create a picture in your mind that will reflect the instructions on the extinguisher: if there's a fire, get everyone outside and ask a member of your family to call the fire department from a neighbour's house. Only then should you permit yourself to fight a small fire. If the fire becomes large, get out. Close doors behind you to slow the spread of the fire.

The ABCD's of Portable Fire Extinguishers

A fire extinguisher is a storage container for an agent like water or chemicals. It is designed to put out a small fire, not a large one. Extinguishers are labelled ABC or D. Ensure you use the right extinguisher for the appropriate type of fire.

- A) **Ordinary Combustibles** – Fires started with paper, wood, drapes and upholstery require a Class A type extinguisher.
- B) **Flammable and Combustible Liquids** – Fires originating from fuel oil, gasoline, paint, grease in a frying pan, solvents and other flammable liquids require a Class B type extinguisher.
- C) **Electrical Equipment** – Fires started with wiring, overheated fuse boxes, conductors, and other electrical sources require a Class C type extinguisher.
- D) **Metals** – Certain metals such as magnesium and sodium require a special dry powder Class D type extinguisher.

A multi-purpose dry chemical labelled ABC puts out most types of fires: wood, paper, cloth, flammable liquids and electrical fires. If you intend to buy more than one, you may want to purchase a BC for the kitchen, an A for the living room and an ABC for the basement and garage.

Buying and Maintaining an Extinguisher

1. Extinguishers come in a dry chemical, foam, carbon dioxide, water, or Halon form. Whatever type you buy, it should be labelled by a nationally recognized testing laboratory.
2. The higher the number rating on the extinguisher, the more fire it puts out. High rated extinguishers are often (not always) the heavier models. Ensure you can hold and operate the one you buy comfortably.
3. Ask your dealer how to have your extinguisher serviced and inspected. Recharge it after ANY use. A partially used extinguisher might as well be empty.
4. Extinguishers should be installed near an escape route and away from potential fire hazards.

Learn How to PASS

1. **Pull** the pin. Some units require the releasing of a lock latch, pressing a puncture lever, inversion or other motion.
2. **Aim** the extinguisher nozzle (horn) at the base of the fire.
3. **Squeeze** or press the handle.
4. **Sweep** from side-to-side at the base of the fire and discharge the contents of the extinguisher.

Foam and water extinguishers require slightly different use. Read the instructions.



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COOKING OIL AND GREASE FIRES ARE A MAJOR CAUSE OF RESIDENTIAL FIRES IN CANADA

Kitchen fires due to cooking oil or grease igniting into flames cause the fastest-spreading and most destructive type of residential fire. When cooking with grease or oil, it is extremely important that you plan ahead so that you will know how to react fast to fire. Here are some tips:

Deep Frying

- The safest way to deep fry foods such as chicken or fries is to use a thermostatically-controlled electric skillet or a deep fat fryer.

Pan Frying

- Keep a pan lid or cookie sheet handy in case grease or oil catches fire. The lid or cookie sheet should be slid over the top of the pan to smother the fire.
- Never attempt to move a flaming pot or pan away from the stove. The movement can fan the flames and so spread the fire. The pan will also likely be very hot, causing you to drop it. In either case, you are placing yourself at great risk. Your immediate action should be to smother the fire by sliding a lid or flat cookie sheet over the pan. Afterwards, turn off the heat and exhaust the fan, allowing the pan time to cool. Most importantly, react fast, because grease fires spread very quickly.

Oven Cooking

- Keep your oven clean. Grease and food splatters can ignite at high temperatures.
- Ensure that you wear oven mitts when removing cooking containers to avoid serious burns.
- Follow the cooking instructions for the recipe and the product you are using.
- Broiling is a popular method of cooking. When you use your broiler, place the rack 5 to 8 cm (two to three inches) from the broiler element. Always place a drip pan beneath the broiler rack to catch the fat drippings. Never use aluminum foil for this purpose because the fat accumulated on the foil could catch fire or spill over.

Microwave Cooking

Microwave ovens are a marvellous time-saving tool, but there are three characteristics of microwave cooking you should be cognisant of:

- The heat is reflected by the metal interior.
- Heat can pass through glass, plastic and other materials.
- Heat is absorbed by the food.

Foods, like those in high-fat or sugar, can heat very rapidly but feel cool to the touch. Pastry fillings can be very hot, but the crust cooler. Milk in baby bottles could be boiling, but the bottle itself not very hot to the touch. Use caution at all times.

Do not use tin foil or any other metal objects in the microwave. If a fire occurs, keep the door closed and unplug the unit. Call a qualified maintenance technician to ensure the microwave is in proper working order before using it again.



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FIRE ESCAPE PLAN

At Work

Do you know

- Your Fire Department's emergency number?
- Your fire escape plan?
- Your designated meeting place in the event of a fire?
- Who your floor fire emergency officer is?
- The location of the nearest fire extinguisher?
- The location of the nearest fire alarm station?
- The location of the nearest two exits?
- Who needs assistance in the event of an emergency

If you don't know, find out now!

- Mobility-impaired? Have you informed your floor fire emergency officer?
- Read the posted fire emergency instructions.
- Report all fire hazards.
- When the fire alarm sounds, notify the Fire Department.

At Home

Statistics reveal that 78 percent of deaths from fire occur in the home, with most of the fatalities taking place between 2 am and 4 am, while occupants are asleep. That is why it is critical to develop an escape plan, because one needs to react quickly since with a fire:

- The smoke is black and very thick, making it impossible to see.
- There is no time for indecision; an entire home can be engulfed within five minutes.
- Most people are killed by smoke inhalation, not the flame of the fire.
- The heat of the fire is extremely intense and can kill you instantly.

Develop and Practice a Fire Escape Plan

- Install smoke alarms on every level. Keep smoke alarms clean and dust-free, checking them monthly. Replace batteries yearly and alarms every 10 years.
- In order to be able to react quickly to fire, draw a floor plan of your home showing all possible exits from each room.
- Where possible, plan two exits: a main route and an alternate route from each room.
- Since the majority of fire deaths occur while you are sleeping, you should practice your plan at night as well, getting down on your hands and knees with a flashlight while crawling to safety. Heavy smoke impairs breathing, which is why staying close to the floor increases chances of escape.
- Make certain that everyone understands that if they hear the smoke alarm, or someone shouting "FIRE", they should immediately evacuate the home.
- Designate a meeting place outside your home in the event of a fire.
- Small children unable to escape should be taught to open their windows and wave an article of clothing to attract attention. Instruct them to wait at the window until someone comes and to never hide from the fire. Discuss with a fire department official whether an escape ladder would be appropriate to install.
- Sleep with doors closed. If children are frightened, parents can close doors after the children fall asleep and use a room monitor to hear them during the night.
- If awakened by a smoke alarm or a fire, instruct family members to feel the door for heat and check air at the bottom. If you don't smell smoke and the air is cool, kneel and open the door slowly, turning your face away from the opening. If smoke is present or the door is hot, use another exit.
- Purchase an A-B-C fire extinguisher, whose rating is based on the fuel: 'A' originates from a wood or paper fire, 'B' is caused by flammable liquids and 'C' is an electrical fire. Learn how to use this fire extinguisher by remembering the acronym PASS. Pull the pin, Aim the extinguisher, Squeeze or press the handle and Sweep side-to-side at the base of the fire.
- If you live in an apartment building, develop your escape plan taking into account fire escape procedures provided by building management.
- Make sure your babysitter understands your fire escape plan.
- Practice Your Escape Plan: regular practice is essential so that every family member knows what to do and will be able to react quickly.
- If anyone in your home is unable to evacuate without assistance, assign someone to assist them.
- Ensure that everyone in your home knows not to re-enter.
- Call the Fire Department from a neighbour's home.



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SAFETY TIPS FOR THE HOME

Kitchen

- Avoid loose long sleeves when cooking.
- Check kettles and toasters for damaged electrical cords and thermostats.
- Use appliances that have an automatic shut-off.
- Keep a timer handy to remind you when the oven and burners should be switched off.
- If you take medication that causes drowsiness, do not use cooking appliances.
- Use a temperature-controlled electric skillet or deep-fryer for frying.
- Never leave your cooking unattended.
- Use appropriate cooking appliances and keep them clean.
- Keep a pot cover nearby to "put a lid on it" in the event of a fire.

Living Room

- Fireplace: always use a fire screen, ensuring it is the appropriate size for the fireplace opening.
- Do not overload electrical outlets or use extension cords in the place of additional outlets.
- Smokers should check furniture for fallen cigarettes or embers, which can smoulder undetected for hours before bursting into flames.
- Ensure careful use of smoking materials and extinguish in water before disposal.
- Never leave cigarettes in an ashtray unattended.
- Use ashtrays with a double rim and deep centre.
- Keep matches, lighters and lit candles out of the reach of children.
- Never leave lit candles unattended.

Bedroom

- Install at least one smoke alarm outside each sleeping area. For improved safety, install a smoke alarm in every bedroom.
- Check electrical appliances regularly: electric blankets, heating pads, curling irons, radios, televisions, irons.
- Bedrooms should be non-smoking areas.

Basement and Attic

- Remove all combustible and flammable materials from the basement and attic.
- Store gasoline in well-ventilated areas.
- Do not store propane indoors.
- Use only approved containers to store and transport gasoline.
- Have a thorough yearly maintenance check of the furnace carried out by a professional.
- When replacing an old furnace, consult a professional to determine the most safe, economical and efficient system for your home.
- Chimneys should be cleaned at least once a year.

Garage and Workshop

- Flammable materials – thinners, gasoline, paints, industrial cleaners – should be stored neatly in approved containers and away from possible ignitable sources.
- Do not smoke, or leave matches or lighters in the garage or workshop.
- Install and know how to properly use the appropriate fire extinguisher for the garage/workshop.
- Keep the area clean. Remove garbage, paper products, oily rags and wood shavings regularly.



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SMOKE KILLS

Hundreds of people die in residential fires in Canada every year. In many fires that have been extinguished in their early stages, people have been found dead of smoke inhalation without having suffered burns. It has been conservatively estimated that many of these lives could have been saved by the installation of properly functioning smoke alarms. Although these devices are no substitute for carefully planned fire prevention measures, they are invaluable to providing an early warning when fire strikes.

Smoke is the cause of the majority of fire-related deaths. Hot flames are low on the list of killers during a fire. A smouldering fire may go undetected for hours, especially while people are asleep. In addition to deadly carbon monoxide, smoke carries poisons such as hydrogen cyanide and irritants such as formaldehyde and acetic acid. Added to this lethal potion are other toxic substances that come from the burning of synthetic materials commonly found in the home, especially those emitted from plastics and foams. Oxides of nitrogen, sulphur dioxide and ammonia are just a few examples. These agents can have a lethal effect before a sleeper is even disturbed; especially when one considers that the fire itself consumes life-sustaining oxygen.

Normally, air is made-up of about 21 percent oxygen. When it falls below the 17 percent level, thinking and coordination become difficult. Below 16 percent, a person's behaviour turns irrational, hindering escape efforts. Breathing becomes impossible when oxygen levels fall below 6 percent.

Super-heated air and gases rise quickly and produce what is known as a "hot" fire. Temperatures above 370°C (700°F) are common in a "hot" fire. At such high temperatures, unconsciousness and death can occur within minutes. Bedrooms located in the upper floors of residences are frequently subjected to these conditions in the advanced stages of a fire.



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LOCATION, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND CLEANING

Locating/Installing Smoke Alarms

- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.
- For best performance, an alarm should be mounted on the ceiling in or near the centre of the room, hall or stairway, and at the head of each stairway leading to an occupied area.
- Optimum location for wall mounts is at least 15 cm (6 inches) from the ceiling but not more than 30 cm (19 inches) from it.
- Avoid installing where the temperature is less than 5°C (41°F) or exceeds 48°C (119°F).
- Keep alarms away from doors and windows.
- Never locate an alarm in front of an air register, fans or vents.
- Keep alarms at least 60 cm (2 feet) from any corner.
- Don't recess an alarm.
- Smoke alarms in rooms with ceiling slopes greater than 30 cm (one foot) rise per 2.4 m (eight feet) horizontally should be located on the high side of the room.
- Avoid locating an alarm at the peak of an "A" frame type ceiling.
- Never paint a smoke alarm.
- Keep alarms 60 to 90 cm (two to three feet) away from light fixtures.

When having an alarm connected into the electrical wiring system of a house you should:

- Use a qualified electrical contractor.
- Never install the alarm in the electrical circuit except at the main panel. Alarms must also never be installed in a circuit connected to an on/off switch.
- Check the alarm when installation is complete.

Mark your calendar: Testing & Cleaning

Test your smoke alarm monthly and clean it every 6 months. Mark it on your calendar so that you don't forget. Things to remember when testing your smoke alarm:

- Ensure that power is being transmitted to the alarm and that it will activate in the presence of smoke.
- Test your smoke alarm by pressing the test button.
- Even alarms with a pilot light that indicate power is being transmitted, should be tested regularly.
- Battery-operated smoke alarms will warn you when batteries need replacing. Despite this, make it a habit to change the batteries yearly.
- When you've been away from home for a few days, check your alarm on your return to ensure it is working properly.
- Remember, your smoke alarm can't protect you if the batteries have been removed or a plug has been disconnected.
- The lifespan of a typical smoke alarm is about 10 years, but some models last as little as 5 years.
- To clean the alarm, open the cover and gently vacuum the interior of it. Frequently, the alarm will sound while the unit is being cleaned.



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SAFETY TIPS FOR THE OFFICE

An office fire can be devastating, resulting in the loss of life, business interruption or permanent closure, jobs, property and information. Offices are loaded with combustibles: carpeting, draperies, papers, books, wood and upholstered furniture, plastic laminate, vinyl-fabric-covered furniture, wood panelling, as well as electrically powered toasters, microwave ovens, kettles, computers and other appliances. Combine these with the human element and the stage is set for a potentially devastating fire.

- Keep the combustible load - carpeting, upholstered furniture - to a minimum.
- Keep exits clear of combustibles e.g. discarded paper and empty cartons.
- In designated areas where smoking is permitted, provide the proper disposal of smoking materials, like an outdoor cigarette receptacle.
- Provide adequate clearance and circulation of air between combustible material and hot surfaces or heat sources such as copy machines, word processors and computers.
- Unplug electrical appliances - coffee makers, space heaters and hot plates - when not in use.
- Restrict and monitor the use of heaters and hot plates.
- To ensure they meet code requirements, all electrical distribution systems should be checked by a professional/certified electrician.
- Perform regularly scheduled and recorded maintenance of electrical equipment.
- Prevent access to the office by unauthorized personnel.
- Keep flammables properly stored and secured.
- Provide adequate security: exterior/interior lighting, intrusion alarms, guard service, well-secured access openings.
- Provide automatic sprinkler protection and/or heat, smoke and fire alarm systems. Adequate sprinkler coverage is the key to providing the most effective fire protection in buildings.
- Strategically locate the portable fire extinguishers suitable for particular fire hazards, and train key employees on their proper operation.
- Establish an 'Emergency Team' and train each member on how to respond to fire emergencies.
- Develop a fire emergency evacuation plan and conduct at least two fire drills per year in order to familiarize office personnel on how to respond to fire emergencies.
- Obtain assistance from your local fire department on fire prevention, use of fire extinguishers, inspections and emergency response procedures.



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FARM SAFETY

Life Saving Tips

- Install smoke alarms inside and outside all bedrooms and in all principal buildings.
- Install the appropriate fire extinguishers in key areas.
- Work with the local fire department to develop and practice a fire escape plan with family and employees, and determine a meeting place.
- Identify who may require special assistance (the elderly and handicapped).
- Make sure buildings are well-spaced.
- Keep cistern and stock pond relatively full and provide clear access to water source.
- Ensure that appropriate fire protection equipment is accessible.

Checklist

- Keep fire department numbers posted on all telephones.
- Ensure all electrical wiring is inspected and up to code.
- Ensure all electrical equipment has a nationally recognized testing agency certification.
- Replace worn wiring and use only 15 amp fuses unless otherwise specified.
- Remove wiring and lighting from wet areas.
- Inspect and maintain fire extinguishers regularly.

Machinery / Equipment – Keep it Clean, Safe and Inspected

- Before installing heating equipment, check product certification and insurance requirements.
- Ensure that the pump is on a separate electrical circuit and located away from other buildings, to safeguard the pressure of the water supply for fire fighters.
- Refuel equipment and internal combustion engines outside, but never while running and only once cool.
- Ensure that crop dryers are equipped with adequate controls enabling them to shut off blowers or dampers when temperatures become too high in the heat transfer chamber.
- Never use "home-made" dryers.

Important Reminders

- Designate safe smoking areas away from barns, crops, stores or flammable materials.
- Before burning, check regulations with your local authority.
- Burn rubbish in an incinerator equipped with a spark arrestor and never in a high wind.
- Keep a pail of water nearby.
- Never carry out field burning.
- Do not use fumigants near an open flame or electric equipment.
- Clean up. Remove all trash from the property.
- Repaint weathered surfaces and remove rotting wood and fencing.

Safe Storage: Spontaneous Ignition of Crops Causes Fires.

Before Storing

- Provide proper ventilation.
- Ensure crops – hay, alfalfa, clover, soybean hays – are well-dried and properly cured.
- Make sure wet grains are below the safe moisture content before storage.
- Check for spontaneous heating hazards regularly, e.g. manure pile.
- Repair leaking roofs and openings to protect stored crops against wetness.

During Storage

- Inspect daily for signs of steaming, irritating odours, wet areas and "flues" in the hay for several weeks.
- Have fire fighting equipment immediately accessible.
- Petroleum products should be stored above ground at least 12 metres (40 feet) from any other building, in a tank on non-combustible support. In all cases vent pipes not less than 3 centimetres (1 1/4") in diameter and cap them with weatherproof hoods.
- Petroleum products should be dispensed from storage tanks with appropriate pumping equipment.



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QUICK FACTS ON CO

WHAT IS IT: A colourless, odourless and tasteless gas.

SIGNS: Stuffy air, water vapour, backdraft and soot from a fireplace.

SYMPTOMS: Headaches, weakness, nausea, vomiting and loss of muscle control. They can be mistaken for flu symptoms.

EFFECTS: If inhaled, carbon monoxide deprives the blood of oxygen. Prolonged exposure can lead to unconsciousness, brain damage or death.

CAUSES: Blocked or dirty vents, flues, chimneys and furnaces, as well as improper ventilation of burning fireplaces or woodstoves.

DEATHS: Approximately 200 per year.

PREVENTION: Annual inspection and cleaning of:

- Furnaces
- Chimneys
- Fireplaces
- Other fuel-burning equipment such as gas dryers

Safety tips on how to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning

INSTALL at least one carbon monoxide detector in your home.

ENSURE a wood or coal-burning stove is properly installed and vented.

DON'T operate a gasoline-powered engine, kerosene stove or charcoal grill in a closed space.

BARBECUE grills should never be operated indoors.

CHECK clothes dryer vents that open outside the house for lint.

CHECK forced air fans for proper ventilation.

**If you suspect carbon monoxide in your home, get out immediately
and call the fire department.**



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FIRE SAFETY FOR SENIORS

The two leading causes of fire deaths and injuries among older adults are smoking materials and the misuse of portable space heaters.

Tips to Remember

- Smokers should have a designated area away from upholstered materials, such as the kitchen table.
- Never smoke in bed while reading - it is too easy to fall asleep and print materials are highly flammable.
- Sleep with the bedroom door closed in order to provide more time to escape if a fire occurs.
- Keep space heaters well-ventilated and at least three feet away from flammable materials. Unplug space heaters when not in use.
- Extension cords are for temporary use only and should not be used with a space heater or electric blanket.
- Never run electrical cords under a carpet or rug.

Smoke Alarms can save your life!

Smoke alarms are inexpensive and easy to install. For assistance with the location and installation of smoke alarms, call your local fire department and visit our 'Smoke Alarms' fact sheet.

- Ensure there is a working smoke alarm on every floor of the home and outside every sleeping area.
- Have a friend or relative test your smoke alarm while you are asleep to ensure you can hear it.
- Once a month, test the battery by pushing the test button and drift smoke from a snuffed-out candle into the alarm.
- Once a year, change the battery.
- To clean the smoke alarm, open the cover and gently vacuum the unit with a soft brush attachment.
- Replace smoke alarms if they are more than 10 years old.

Fire Escape Planning saves lives:

- Develop and practice a fire escape plan. Be sure to include all hallways and stairs.
- Know: (1) two ways out of every room (2) how to escape from all levels of your home.
- Ensure all doors and windows can be unlocked or opened.

In case of fire - GET OUT AND STAY OUT – never go back into a burning building.

- Crawl low near the floor to the nearest exit maintaining contact with the wall.
- Test the door by feeling it with the back of your hand. If it is hot, do not open. Use an alternative route.
- If the door and knob are cool, stay low with your shoulder against the door while opening slowly. Be ready to close the door if smoke and heat rush in.
- If trapped, put as many closed doors as possible between you and the fire, and seal all cracks in doors and windows with towels or bedding.
- If your clothing catches fire, stop where you are, drop gently to the ground and cover your face with your hands while rolling back-and-forth to put out the flames.
- Cool minor burns with cold water.



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BABYSITTER'S FIRE SAFETY GUIDE

As the babysitter, you are responsible for the children in your care. Here are some important points you need to know if there's a fire emergency in the home where you babysit.

Before the parents leave

- Write down the complete address and phone number of the place where you are babysitting and phone numbers for:
 - Fire, Police, Ambulance & Emergency Services - often one number - 9-1-1.
 - Where the parents can be reached.
 - Neighbour(s).
- Keep this information in your pocket so that it's with you at all times and handy in case of an emergency.

Plan Your Escape

If there is a fire while you are in charge, you must know what to do:

- Is there a fire escape plan? If not, develop one.
- Identify all escape routes.
- Find at least two ways out of each room.
- Plan how you and the children will escape safely.
- Decide on an outside meeting place.
- Ask for a demonstration of the smoke alarm.

Guide to Fire Safety

The best way to keep fire safe is to be watchful of the children in your charge:

- Never leave children unsupervised.
- Check on sleeping children regularly.
- Keep matches and lighters out of their reach.
- Do not light candles while babysitting.
- Don't smoke on the job.
- Keep children away from the stove, hot liquids, electric lamps and space heaters.
- Keep space heaters at least 1 metre (40 inches) from drapes, furniture and bedding.
- Cook safely and only if you have permission.
- Turn pot handles in to avoid children knocking them over or pulling them down.
- Smother a pan fire with a lid. Never use water.
- Make sure you know what cooking materials can be used for the microwave.

Burn Prevention

- Always test hot foods and liquids before feeding.

Fire Safety: What to do, because fire spreads fast - don't delay!

- If your clothes catch fire, STOP, DROP & ROLL on the floor to smother the flames.
- Cool minor burns with cold water. If your skin is blistered, charred or dead white, get emergency help immediately.
- When you see flames, smell smoke or hear the smoke alarm, get everybody out of the house.
- Feel the door first. If it isn't hot, open it very slowly.
- If there is fire or smoke use another exit.
- Crawl low under smoke - the air near the floor is safer to breathe.
- If you cannot escape, close the door and seal around it with cloth to prevent smoke from entering the room.
- Always use the stairs and never the elevators.
- Designate a meeting place a safe distance from the house and make sure everyone is there.
- Take the children to a neighbour.
- Phone the emergency number from the neighbour's home.
- Give the complete address, describe the situation and inform the operator if anyone is still inside.
- Stay on the phone until you are told to hang up.
- Do not go back to the house for any reason.

Emergency Numbers:

FIRE: _____

POLICE: _____

AMBULANCE: _____

PARENTS: _____

NEIGHBOUR: _____

THIS ADDRESS: _____



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DANGER! GASOLINE

Facts you should know to prevent explosion and fire from gasoline vapours.

Gasoline can be more dangerous than dynamite because it emits invisible, explosive vapours that ignite easily, even at low temperatures. Vapour from gasoline is also heavier than air and so travels close to the floor where it can easily come into contact with sparks from electric motors, water heaters, furnace motors and switches. Sparks or open flames can ignite vapours a great distance from their source.

By law, gasoline must be stored in safety containers which have been approved by a nationally recognized and certified agency. Approved containers display these labels prominently. However, care must be taken even though these containers are designed to prevent spillage. Minor gasoline spills should be cleaned up immediately.

Anyone using or storing gasoline should keep an appropriate Class B fire extinguisher nearby since it is designed to extinguish gasoline or other flammable liquid fires.

NEVER store gasoline in basements, pits or other confined areas. Gasoline must be stored in areas that are well-ventilated, free from ignition sources and in areas permitted by the National Fire Code of Canada.

- **NEVER** store or transport gasoline in glass, in metal cans with plastic parts or in plastic containers which have not been approved for these uses.
- **NEVER** smoke while you are handling gasoline or other flammable liquids.
- **NEVER** use gasoline to start your barbecue or as a cleaner or solvent.

In case of major spills - Get out and stay out!

- Clear people from the area immediately.
- Open exterior doors and windows to ventilate the area.
- Call the fire department from a neighbour's phone.
- Do not operate light switches, electrical appliances or any other source of sparks.
- Don't light matches or lighters, and extinguish cigarettes immediately.
- Do not re-enter the area until the hazard has been eliminated.

**Call your local fire department if you have questions concerning
the safe storage and use of gasoline.**



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BURNS – THE NEED FOR CAUTION

Every year in Canada, severe injuries and deaths occur as a result of burns and scalds. Sadly, many of these injuries affected children and could have easily been prevented. Usually, it's children's curiosity that gets them into trouble. They come across a lighter or matches, or they manage to get too close to a baseboard heater or a hot stove element.

Burns from Hot Liquids

- When bathing children, always turn cold water on first before the hot. Test the water temperature before allowing your child to get into the bathtub or shower. Consider adjusting your hot water heater to a maximum temperature of 49°C or 120°F.
- Children should not play with a hot water tap. Teach them to turn the cold water on first.
- Avoid carrying or holding children while you are drinking a hot beverage.

Burns from Household Appliances

- Turn pot handles towards the centre of the stove.
- Keep cords for electrical appliances such as deep fryers, kettles, steam irons and toasters out of the reach of children.
- Supervise children near lamps with accessible hot light bulbs.
- Store items that interest children, such as cookies, away from the immediate area around the kitchen stove.
- Keep children away from stationary and portable heaters.

Lighters and Matches

Every year hundreds of fires are started by children playing with lighters or matches. Many of these fires are caused by children under the age of five. Children as young as 18 months have caused fires by operating lighters. Disposable lighters sold by retailers must be child-resistant, but remember, child-resistant does not mean childproof. Store lighters out of sight and out of the reach of children and do not remove the child safety devices from the lighter. Remember to:

- Teach children that lighters and matches are not toys.
- Instruct young children to tell an adult if they find lighters or matches.
- Set a good example: always use lighters and matches responsibly.
- Install and maintain smoke alarms.
- Supervise your children's play.

Prevention is the best way to keep your home safe from fire. For more information on fire prevention, contact your local Fire Department.



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WINTER SAFETY

The winter season is the worst season for fires in Canada. That is why all Canadians must be mindful of the importance of fire prevention and safety. During the winter, we must heat our homes, most of our meals are prepared and eaten indoors, our clothing is dried indoors and people who smoke tend to do so indoors. Besides following the advice provided for in the other fact sheets on this site, for the winter remember that:

- Heating appliances such as space heaters should not have anything combustible closeby and need at least one metre (three feet) of space around them. Inspect the electrical cord attached. If it overheats, you have a fire hazard. Keep young children away from them.
- Electrical and heating systems can fail and become fire hazards. Ensure they are regularly checked by a professional, especially prior to the winter season when fireplaces, heaters, appliances and other electrical equipment are in maximum use.
- Smoking while in bed, tired or under the influence of alcohol or medication is the most common cause of fires that kill.
- Most chimney fires occur with wood-burning fireplaces. Ensure chimneys are cleaned and professionally inspected regularly. Burn only small quantities of wood at a time.
- Teach children that fire is not a toy; it is a tool we use to cook food and heat our homes.
- Educate your children about the dangers of fire and make sure they know that all fires, even small ones, can spread very quickly.
- Never use a flammable liquid near a flame or source of spark. Be aware of hidden sources like water heater pilot lights, electric motors or heaters. Never smoke while pouring or using flammable liquids.
- If even a small doubt exists about any appliance/equipment that you use, do not hesitate to contact a qualified technician. It may save your life, and the lives of your loved ones.

Fireplace Safety

A Fireplace becomes dangerous when accumulated tar or creosote catches fire or from uncontrolled burning or over-fuelling. Other causes of fireplace-related fires are substandard design or installation and lack of safety precautions.

- Open the damper before lighting the fire, and keep it open until the ashes are cool enough to touch.
- Ensure the fire is completely out before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Do not store combustible materials such as paper or wood too close to the fireplace.
- Use a screen in front of the fireplace opening to protect children and to prevent embers from escaping and igniting carpets, etc.

Fireplace Safety (Cont'd)

- Never leave children alone near a fireplace.
- Use dry, well-seasoned wood in small amounts.
- Have chimneys cleaned and serviced at regular intervals by a professional.
- Never overload your fireplace.
- Never use charcoal starter fluids, gasoline or any flammable substance to start fires.
- When using artificial logs, burn only one at a time and follow instructions on the wrapping.
- Always place the ashes in a metal container and take them outside the house.

The Winter Season and Carbon Monoxide

- It is important to install a carbon monoxide detector in your home. However, carbon monoxide detectors do not replace the need for prevention through yearly maintenance and inspection of heating systems and appliances.
- Smoke inhalation from fires is the most common form of carbon monoxide poisoning. Cigarette smoke and vehicle exhaust are the most common sources of regular carbon monoxide exposure.
- There must be an adequate supply of air for complete burning or combustion, or an excessive amount of carbon monoxide will accumulate indoors. Ensure that your wood stove or fireplace is not competing – for long periods of time – with your clothes dryer, kitchen, bathroom and attic vent fans, central vacuum cleaners and kitchen barbecues, which exhaust air from the home and so starve the furnace or the fireplace of oxygen.
- Proper venting of fuel-burning appliances to the outside is also essential to prevent collection of carbon monoxide gas inside buildings.
- Never insulate or try to seal up a drafty hood, wind cap or exhaust vent on any natural gas appliance (furnace, water heater, range, dryer, space heater or fireplace). Keep all fuel-burning equipment free of lint, dust and trash. Don't store anything close to the equipment that could restrict air circulation.
- Do a visual inspection of the equipment to look for signs of equipment problems, such as soot on a fireplace face, water collecting near a burner or rusted venting. If even a small doubt exists, have the equipment inspected by a qualified technician.
- Periodically check vent pipes between gas appliances and the chimney for corrosion or rust.
- Equipment that uses natural gas should show a clear blue flame—a yellow or orange flame may indicate a problem. If a problem appears, call a qualified technician.
- Ensure a source of fresh air is available, for an example an open window or flue, when operating a wood-burning fireplace.

The Dangers of Extension Cords

- Extension cords are a common cause of electrical fires. That is why you must be careful to use only extension cords that are rated for the power used by the device they are powering.
- Extension cords must never be run inside walls or under rugs or furniture. They can be damaged by traffic or heavy furniture and start arcing, which can lead to a fire.
- Extension cords can get warm during use and must be able to dissipate this heat or they can start a fire.

Signs of an Electrical Problem

- **Flickering lights.** If the lights dim every time you turn on an appliance it means that the circuit is overloaded or has a loose connection.
- **Sparks.** If sparks appear when you insert or remove a plug, it could be a sign of loose connections.
- **Warm electrical cord.** If an electrical cord is warm to the touch, the cord is underrated or defective.
- **Frequent blown fuses or broken circuits.** A fuse that continues to blow or circuit breaker that keeps tripping is an important warning sign of problems.
- **Frequent bulb burnout.** A light bulb that burns out frequently is a sign that the bulb is too high in wattage for the fixture.

How to avoid Dryer Fires

- Lack of maintenance is the number one cause of dryer fires. That is why it is critical to clean the lint filter before and after each use, and wipe away any lint that has accumulated around the drum.
- Perform periodic checks to ensure that the air exhaust vent pipe is unobstructed (lint accumulation) and the outdoor vent flap opens readily.
- Do not run the dryer without a lint filter.
- You are encouraged to not leave the dryer running if you go out, in case it malfunctions.



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HOLIDAY SAFETY

The holidays are a time for celebration with family and friends. Unfortunately, they are also a time when the number of preventable residential fires increases across Canada. That's why fire safety should be a key consideration in any holiday plans. It is also why it is vital to ensure smoke alarms are installed on every level of the home and have working batteries in them. This should be the time of year for celebration, so let us be as vigilant about being fire-safe as we are about not drinking and driving. The following safety tips will help everyone be safer this holiday season.

In the Kitchen

- Never leave cooking unattended. This is the leading cause of kitchen fires.
- Let your family know about the importance of paying attention to cooking.
- If distracted by another activity or a phone call, turn off the heat before leaving the kitchen.
- Turn pot or pan handles inward to prevent burns caused by overturned pots.
- Wear short or close-fitting sleeves to avoid clothes catching fire.
- Keep flammable materials, such as curtains, newspapers or plastic bags, away from heat sources such as burners and the oven.
- Have a pot lid nearby to smother a pan fire.
- If frying foods, use a temperature-controlled electric skillet or deep-fat fryer.

Holiday Tree

- If purchasing a live tree, check for freshness by pulling on the needles. If they are brown or come off easily, the tree is probably dry and can be a fire hazard.
- When setting up the tree, try to position it near an electrical outlet to keep cords short.
- Cut two to five centimetres diagonally off the base of the tree, and place it securely in a large holder; ensure that the water in the holder stays at least one centimetre above the cut to prevent the tree from drying out.
- Before leaving home or going to sleep, always unplug tree lights.
- For an artificial tree, check the label to ensure it is fire-retardant.
- If using an aluminum or metal tree, do not decorate with strings of lights or electrical products (these trees are conductors of electricity).
- Make sure any tree is kept away from exits, heat vents, fireplaces, radiators, televisions and other heat sources.

Disposing of Holiday Trees

- Immediately after holiday celebrations, dispose of live trees and take down artificial ones.
- Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove. They can spark and ignite nearby items.
- The best way to dispose of a live tree is to take it to a recycling centre or have it hauled away by a community pick up service.

Decorating Tips

- Use only non-combustible, flame retardant or flame resistant materials to decorate your home or tree.
- Never use candles to decorate trees.
- Keep candles away from decorations, trees and other combustible materials.
- Keep candles in a sturdy holder away from children, pets and combustible materials. Blow them out before leaving the room or going to sleep.
- To eliminate the risk of an open candle flame, use battery-powered candles whenever possible, especially when using candles in a decorative setting.
- Purchase only lights and electrical decorations bearing the name of an independent testing lab (ULC or CSA, for example), and follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation and maintenance.
- Indoor lights should only be used indoors; outdoor lights should only be used outdoors.
- Run outdoor light cords above the ground to keep them away from snow and water.
- Carefully inspect new and previously used light strings, and replace damaged items before plugging lights in.
- Be mindful of not damaging a cord's wire insulation when mounting lights. It is safer to use plastic clips instead of nails.
- Keep pets and young children away from electrical decorations and light strings.
- Locate decorations in an area that will not block or interfere with an exit, or exit route.
- Space heaters need space - ensure at least one metre of clearance.
- Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.
- Never place furniture, rugs or other objects over electrical cords. Any damage the cord may sustain can go unnoticed.
- Never overload extension cords.
- Take down all decorations and bring outdoor electrical lights inside immediately after the holidays.

Entertaining

- Holiday wrapping can be highly combustible and should be kept away from heat sources such as candles, lamps, fireplaces and wood burning stoves.
- Never throw wrapping paper in a fire place. Rapid burning can generate sparks or ignite creosote in the chimney.
- Alcohol and fire are a dangerous mix. Keep a close eye on anyone cooking or smoking while under the influence of alcohol.
- Keep matches and lights up high, out of sight and reach of children.
- When smokers visit your house, ask them to keep smoking materials with them, and away from small children.
- After a party, always check on, between and under upholstery and cushions and inside trash cans for smouldering cigar or cigarette butts.

Portable Electric Heaters

- When purchasing a space heater, be sure to choose one that automatically shuts off if it falls over.
- Place space heaters on a flat, level surface and provide at least one metre of space from things that can burn – blankets, furniture, curtains and clothing.
- Avoid using an electrical heating device on the same circuit with another high wattage appliance, such as a microwave or toaster oven.
- Regularly inspect the wall outlet, heater plug and cord for excessive heat.
- Check electrical heating equipment regularly; replace loose, frayed or damaged cords.

NOTE: never use a range or oven to heat your home.