Think. Prevent. Protect. – Fire Prevention Week

Did you know that if a fire starts in your home, you may have as little as two minutes to escape? Working smoke alarms and a practiced fire escape plan can save lives.

Every year, Fire Prevention Week serves as an important reminder that fire safety is something to practice year-round. Fires can start unexpectedly, but taking steps to prevent them and preparing your household can make all the difference.

Be Prepared Before a Fire

Taking preventative measures can reduce the risk of a home fire and help keep your household safe.

- **Install smoke alarms on every level of your home.** Inside bedrooms, and outside sleeping areas. Test them regularly and replace alarms according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- **Maintain heating equipment.** Have furnaces, fireplaces, chimneys, and other heating sources inspected and cleaned as recommended. Poorly maintained heating equipment can increase the risk of fire.
- **Check electrical wiring and outlets.**
    - Replace frayed or damaged extension cords.
    - Do not use cords with exposed wires or damaged plugs.
    - Keep cords away from rugs, carpets, and high-traffic areas.
    - Make sure electrical outlets have cover plates and no exposed wiring.
    - Avoid overloading outlets and extension cords.
- **Use safe appliances.** Purchase electrical appliances and devices, including space heaters, that are certified by a recognized testing laboratory.
- **Keep flammable materials away from heat.** Store combustible items away from furnaces, stoves, fireplaces, space heaters, and other heat sources.
- **Store flammable materials safely.** Dispose of rags used with flammable household chemicals properly and store them in appropriate metal containers with tight-fitting lids when required.

Fire Prevention in the Home

Preparation is one of the best ways to protect your household during a fire.

- Teach children what a smoke alarm sounds like and what to do when they hear it.

- Make sure everyone knows two ways out of every room, when possible.
- Choose a designated family meeting place outside and away from the home.
- Create a family emergency communication plan and make sure everyone knows who to contact if family members become separated.
- Practice your home fire escape plan at least twice a year.
- During your drills, make sure everyone knows how to respond when a smoke alarm sounds.
- Make sure everyone knows how to call 9-1-1.
- Teach household members to STOP, DROP, and ROLL if their clothing catches fire.
- If your home has a fire extinguisher, make sure adults know where it is and how to use it safely. Remember that extinguishers should only be used when the fire is small, everyone has exited or can exit safely, and there is a clear escape route behind you.

Taking Action During a Fire

If a fire occurs, get out, stay out, and call 9-1-1.

- Alert everyone in the home by yelling “Fire!” and activating the smoke alarm if it has not already sounded.
- Leave immediately and do not stop to collect belongings.
- Use the stairs instead of elevators if you live in a building with elevators.
- If a door or doorknob feels warm, or smoke is blocking your primary escape route, use your second way out.
- Never open a door that feels warm to the touch.
- If you must move through smoke, stay low and crawl or move beneath the smoke toward your exit.
- Close doors behind you as you leave, if you can do so safely. Closing doors can help slow the spread of fire and smoke.
- If you cannot safely escape, stay in a room with the door closed. Call 9-1-1, tell them your location, and signal for help from a window if possible.
- Once outside, stay outside. Never go back inside a burning building.
- Go to your designated meeting place and let firefighters know if anyone or any pets may still be inside.

Fire Safety for Children

Children can be especially vulnerable during a fire emergency. Teaching children about fire safety and keeping potential ignition sources out of reach can help prevent fires and protect your family.

- Keep matches, lighters, and other ignition sources locked up and out of children's reach.
- Teach children that matches and lighters are tools for adults, not toys.

- Never leave children unattended around candles, fireplaces, stoves, or other open flames.
- Consider using flameless candles instead of traditional candles.
- Teach children what smoke alarms sound like and practice your escape plan with them regularly.
- Make sure children know to get outside and stay outside if a fire occurs.

Fire Safety for Pets

Pets are also vulnerable during a home fire. Include your pets in your family's emergency plan and practice getting them out safely.

- **Practice your escape plan with your pets.** Know where they tend to hide and practice getting them to come when called.
- **Keep pets away from open flames.** Never leave pets unattended around candles, fireplaces, or cooking appliances.
- **Consider flameless candles.** They eliminate the open flame that could be knocked over by a curious pet.
- **Protect your stove.** Consider removing stove knobs or using protective covers when you leave your home if your pets could access the stove.
- **Secure young or curious pets.** When you are away, keep pets in a safe area away from potential fire hazards.
- **Keep pet carriers accessible.** Store carriers and leashes where they can be quickly grabbed during an evacuation.
- **Place a pet alert sticker near your entrance.** This lets firefighters know that pets may be inside.
- **Never delay your escape or put yourself in danger to rescue a pet.** Tell firefighters about any pets that may still be inside.

Think. Prevent. Protect.

Fire safety begins before an emergency happens. Take time to check your smoke alarms, identify two ways out of each room, create a family meeting place, and practice your escape plan. Talk with children about fire safety and make sure pets are included in your emergency preparations.

A few minutes of preparation today can make a life-saving difference during a fire.

Think ahead. Prevent fires. Protect the people and pets you love.