

# Burn & Fire Prevention Safety

*Tip Sheet*

Health **ONE** Injury Prevention

## Burn & Fire Prevention Safety

The best treatment for burns is prevention. Did you know the most common type of burn is a scald injury caused by hot liquids, steam, oil, or grease? Fortunately, by taking a few simple precautions, you can do a great deal to prevent fires and burns. Here are some important safety tips for each area of your home.

### ***Kitchen/Cooking Safety***

- Don't leave the room when something is cooking on the stove.
- Keep your oven and stovetop clean.
- Don't put anything flammable near the stove (e.g., towels, aerosol cans, pot holders, etc.).
- Put pots and pans on the back burners and turn the handles inward so that they don't stick out.
- Always maintain a 3 foot "kid-free zone" around the kitchen stove.
- Roll up your sleeves when cooking.
- Turn off the stove if you have to reach above the flame.
- Use only microwave-safe containers in the microwave.
- Don't microwave baby bottles.
- Keep hot drinks away from children. Don't hold children while carrying a hot liquid.
- Don't put hot food on tables with a tablecloth or placemat if children can pull these off the table.
- Store matches and lighters out of children's reach.

### **What can you do to protect yourself?**

- Wear protective gloves or mitts when handling hot pots or cooking with hot deep-frying oil.
- Wear non-skid shoes to prevent slipping on wet or greasy tile floors.
- Extinguish hot oil/grease fires by sliding a lid over the top of the container and then turn off burner.
- Never carry or move oil containers when the oil is hot or on fire.
- Avoid reaching over or across hot surfaces and burners.

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**Injury Prevention**

- Read and follow directions for proper use of electrical appliances.

## ***Bathroom***

- Turn your hot water heater to 100 degrees.
- Don't use electrical items (e.g., hair dryers, shavers, curling irons, radios) near a sink or tub of water.
- Test bath water before putting your child in the tub. Use your wrist or elbow and not your hand.

## ***Fireplaces and Heaters***

- Always place your space heater on a flat, level floor.
- Always plug your space heater directly into wall outlets - not into extension cords.
- Always unplug your space heater when you are not using it.
- Never leave a space heater on when you go to sleep or are not in the room.
- Always maintain a 3 foot "kid-free zone or item-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Always look for a label from a nationally recognized testing lab when buying a space heater.
- Refuel kerosene heaters outside only, with kerosene only, when the unit is cool.
- Use a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace.
- Hire a professional to inspect and clean your chimney every year.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in a convenient spot and know how to use it.
- Throw ashes only into metal cans.

## ***Basement/Utility Area***

- Don't allow anything to touch the hot water heater or furnace.
- Clean and inspect the dryer lint trap after each load of laundry.

## ***Garage and Grill***

- Don't keep gasoline anywhere near your house. It should be only in an UN-attached garage or shed.
- Fill gas motors outside only.

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- Don't start your lawnmower or snow blower near the gas container or fumes.
- Don't put gasoline on a grill.
- Don't add lighter fluid to a lit fire.
- Use gas grills only outside.
- Make sure you have water or sand nearby to put out a fire.
- Read directions and follow warnings on all household cleaning products, garden products, insecticides, and other household chemicals.
- Keep all household chemical products in their original labeled containers.

## ***Fire Prevention***

- Install smoke detectors on every floor of your house and make sure to check the batteries on a regular basis.
- Replace any electrical cord that is cracked or frayed. Don't overload extension cords or run them under rugs.
- Never smoke in bed or when you are sleepy. You should use large, deep ashtrays for smokers and put butts out with water before throwing them away.
- **Keep smoking materials locked up in a high place.** Never leave cigarette lighters or matches where children can reach them.
- **Never play with lighters or matches when you are with your children.** Children may try to do the same things they see you do.
- Medical oxygen can explode if a flame or spark is near. Even if the oxygen is turned off, it can still catch on fire.

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- If there's a fire and you must exit through smoke, crawl on your hands and knees to the nearest safe exit.

## ***Keeping Your Children Safe In Case of a Fire***

- Make an escape plan. Children sometimes need help getting out of house or they may not know how to escape or what to do unless an adult shows them. Make sure it explains how you'll exit the house and where you will meet.
- **Have a plan for young children who cannot get outside by themselves.** You will need to wake babies and very young children and help them get out. In your plan, talk about who will help each child get out safely.
- **Know two ways out of every room.** It is important to find two ways out of every room in the house, in case one exit is blocked or dangerous to use. Plan a safe way to get to the ground from every room.
- **Choose a meeting place outside the home.** Children should know what to do when they hear a smoke alarm and there is no adult around. Help them practice going to the outside meeting place. Teach them to never go back inside a building that is on fire.
- **Practice the plan.** Hold family fire drills twice a year.

Sources:

[www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov)  
[burnfoundation.org](http://burnfoundation.org)  
<http://www.nfpa.org>