

Did You Know???

The United States has one of the highest death rates in the industrialized world. Fires that start in the kitchen from cooking are the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Unattended cooking, rather than mechanical failure or malfunction, often starts cooking fires. As many as two-thirds of fires caused by heating your home are started by portable or fixed space heaters. If you have at least one working smoke alarm you can reduce your chance of dying in a house fire by 45 percent. Smoking materials like smoldering cigarettes and ashtrays are still the leading cause of fatal fires in the United States. Children playing with fire account for 400 deaths, 3000 injuries, and \$280 million in property loss or damage every year.

Why Prevention???

All disasters like earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and fires that remove a family from their home are devastating. But of these, there is only one that can be prevented. That disaster is fire. Even though fire is preventable, it is responsible for American deaths than all natural disasters combined. Although some fires like forest fires seem uncontrollable, there are several precautionary actions you can take to prevent a fire in your home.

Home Checklist

OUTSIDE

- Address is visible from the street during the day and at night.
- For long driveways, house number is posted where driveway meets the street.
- A safe family meeting place outside has been established.

FRONT DOOR

- **NO** double key-locking dead bolts.
- No clutter around the door, making it hard to get out.

SMOKE ALARMS

- One in each bedroom and on each level of the home in the hallway.
- Tested monthly.
- Batteries are changed annually.
- Vacuumed monthly.
- Replaced every ten years.
- Chirping smoke alarms need new batteries.
- If you have tried new batteries and cleaning it, and it still does not work – **REPLACE IT!**

LAUNDRY ROOM

- Clean lint trap after every use.
- Vacuum back of dryer, lint trap and exhaust vent twice yearly.
- Use appropriate electrical outlets for your washer and dryer.

KITCHEN

- No clutter on the stove.
- Small appliances are turned off and unplugged when not in use.
- Toasters are kept away from clutter.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking, never leave cooking unattended.
- Pot handles are turned inward.
- Put a lid on stovetop fires.

- Oven fires are stopped by closing the door and turning off the heat.

HALLWAYS

- Halls are clear of debris.

BEDROOMS

- Door closed when sleeping.
- No smoking in bed.
- Escape ladder if on second or third floor.
- Combustibles are kept away from heaters.

GARAGE

- Electrical items are unplugged.
- Rags stored away from flammable liquids.
- No more than 5 gallons of gas stored in a proper container.
- No clutter lying around to catch fire.

LIVING ROOM

- Screen or glass doors are installed and used in front of the fireplace.
- 911 stickers and home address are placed on or near all telephones.

ELECTRICAL

- Electrical cords are in good condition with no cracks or frays.
- Electrical outlets are not overloaded.

OTHER

- Matches, lighters, and smoking material are kept out of reach of children.
- A working fire extinguisher is kept on hand and occupants know how to use it.
- Always call 911 if there is a fire.

An overloaded outlet with too many cords plugged into it can quickly develop into a house fire. A spark that flies from a fireplace not protected by a screen or glass doors can ignite flooring materials like carpet, vinyl, or wood. Cooking fires are the number one cause of house fires in the U.S. Do not leave your kitchen while you are cooking. Keep a lid nearby to cover a fire if it occurs. For further information or if you would like assistance inspecting your home for fire safety needs contact the Olivette Fire Department at **314-993-0408**.