



FIRE SAFETY TIPS

for your home
and family



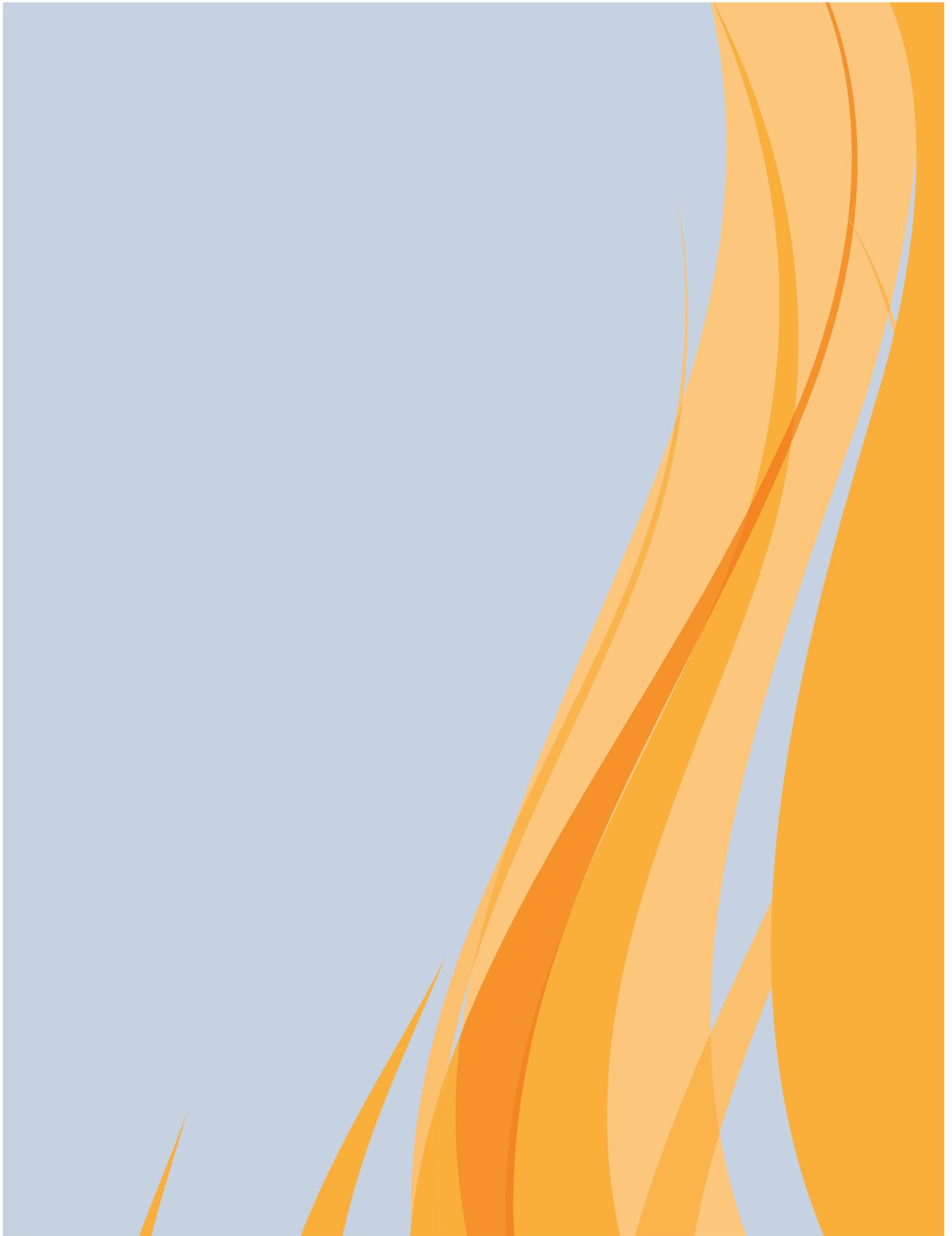


Table of Contents

Fire Safety Equipment & Home Escape Plans

Home Smoke Alarms.....	2
Home Smoke Alarms for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.....	3
Carbon Monoxide Alarms	3
Portable Fire Extinguishers.....	4
Home Fire Sprinklers.....	4
Home Escape Plans	5
Fire Alarms in Apartment Buildings	6
Hotel & Motel Safety	6

Safety in the Home

Cooking Safety.....	7
Scald Prevention	7
Microwaves	8
Superheated Water	8
Candle Safety	8
Clothes Dryers.....	9
Electrical	9
Portable Space Heaters.....	10
Heating.....	10
Smoking	10

Miscellaneous Fire Safety

Fire Safety during Winter.....	11
Wood & Pellet Stoves	12
Generators	12

Fire Safety Equipment & Home Escape Plans

Home Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are a key part of a home escape plan. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so you can get outside quickly.

- Working smoke alarms save lives, cutting the risk of dying in a home fire in half.
- Smoke alarms should be installed inside every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the house, including the basement.
- It is best to use interconnected smoke alarms. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Test all smoke alarms at least once a month. Press the test button to be sure the smoke alarm is working.
- Replace ALL smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.
- A smoke alarm should be placed on the ceiling or high wall. Smoke alarms should be at least 3 metres (10 feet) from the stove to help reduce false alarms.

Homeowners - have a responsibility to install and maintain their smoke alarms.

Landlords/Apartment managers - have a responsibility to install smoke alarms as required by the year of construction and test them to ensure they are in working order prior to tenant occupancy. The landlord is also required to maintain the smoke alarm in working condition. Smoke alarms should be inspected whenever tenancy changes to ensure the smoke alarms are working properly.

Tenants - should notify their landlord immediately if they do not have the required number of working smoke alarms. In the event of inadequate smoke alarms, the tenant should consider installing their own battery operated smoke alarm(s).

Did you know?

Dwelling units constructed before the British Columbia Building Code required smoke alarms in 1979 are also required to have a smoke alarm. Smoke alarms are permitted to be battery operated in a dwelling unit constructed before the March 31, 1979 British Columbia Building Code inception date, or in a building which is not supplied with electrical power.

Dwelling units constructed after the 1979 building code changes require smoke alarms to be permanently wired to the home's electrical system, and must be interconnected.

All smoke alarms should be replaced after 10 years, taking advantage of current technology and to reduce the chances of failure due to deterioration. When smoke alarms are being replaced the installation must not reduce the level of protection. In other words, existing electronically interconnected smoke alarms should be replaced with similar type smoke alarms that provide the same or higher level of protection. If additional smoke alarms are being added in the home they may be battery operated.



Home Smoke Alarms for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Working smoke alarms save lives, however, people who are deaf or hard of hearing may not be able to depend on the traditional smoke alarm to alert them of a fire. Specifically designed devices are available and include low-frequency audible alarms, strobe lights, and bed/pillow shaker attachments.

To find strobe light smoke alarms, visit your local home improvement store or look online. Many brands, such as Kidde and First Alert, make these types of alarms. For pillow shakers, bed shakers, transmitters, or receivers, use a general search engine to look them up online.



Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Often called the silent killer, carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible odorless, colourless gas created when fuels such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, and oil burn incompletely. In the home, heating and cooking equipment can be sources of carbon monoxide.

- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleep area and on every level of the home.
- Test your CO alarm at least once a month.
- Replace your CO alarm when it is 10 years old.
- A person can be poisoned by a small amount of CO.
- If a CO alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors. Call for help once you are outside and stay there until emergency personnel declare that it is safe to re-enter.
- During and after a snowstorm, make sure all vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow buildup.
- Have fuel-burning heating equipment and chimneys inspected each year before the cold weather sets in. Never use an oven to heat your home.

Portable Fire Extinguishers

It is always better to fight a fire through prevention and early detection. However, with training and education adults can use portable fire extinguishers to extinguish small, contained fires such as a cooking pan, garbage can, or campfire.



- Before trying to put out or contain a fire, be sure that:
 - you know how to use the fire extinguisher and it is the correct type
 - everyone else is leaving the home and someone is calling 911
 - the fire is small, confined, and not spreading
 - you have a clear escape route and will not be overcome by smoke
- If the fire does not go out after using the fire extinguisher, back out of the area, close the door if possible, safely get outside, and call 911.
- For the home, it is recommended to have a 5-pound ABC portable fire extinguisher.
- Check your fire extinguisher at least twice a year to make sure it is holding its pressure; check the pressure gauge. Also, make sure the powder inside the extinguisher is moving by banging the bottom of the extinguisher with your hand or a rubber mallet.



Home Fire Sprinklers

Over 80% of fire deaths occur in the home. Home fire sprinklers can save lives and property from fire. Sprinklers respond quickly and effectively to fire, often extinguishing the fire before the fire department arrives.

- A home fire sprinkler system may reduce the homeowner's insurance premium.
- Fire departments typically use about 10 times as much water as a fire sprinkler would use to contain a fire.
- Fire sprinklers are environmentally friendly. They can reduce the amount of water run-off and pollution, fire damage by up to 71%, and water usage to fight a fire by 91%.
- Burnt toast will not activate a fire sprinkler. Only the high temperature of a fire will activate the sprinkler.
- A home fire sprinkler system is easy to maintain. Inspect your home to make sure the sprinklers are not blocked by something that would prevent water from coming out, such as paint, and be sure the main control valve is never turned off.
- Home sprinklers can be affected by cold and warm climates. Guidelines have been created for proper installation of systems to avoid freezing pipes. A home fire sprinkler system should be winterized the same as you would winterize a domestic water supply.

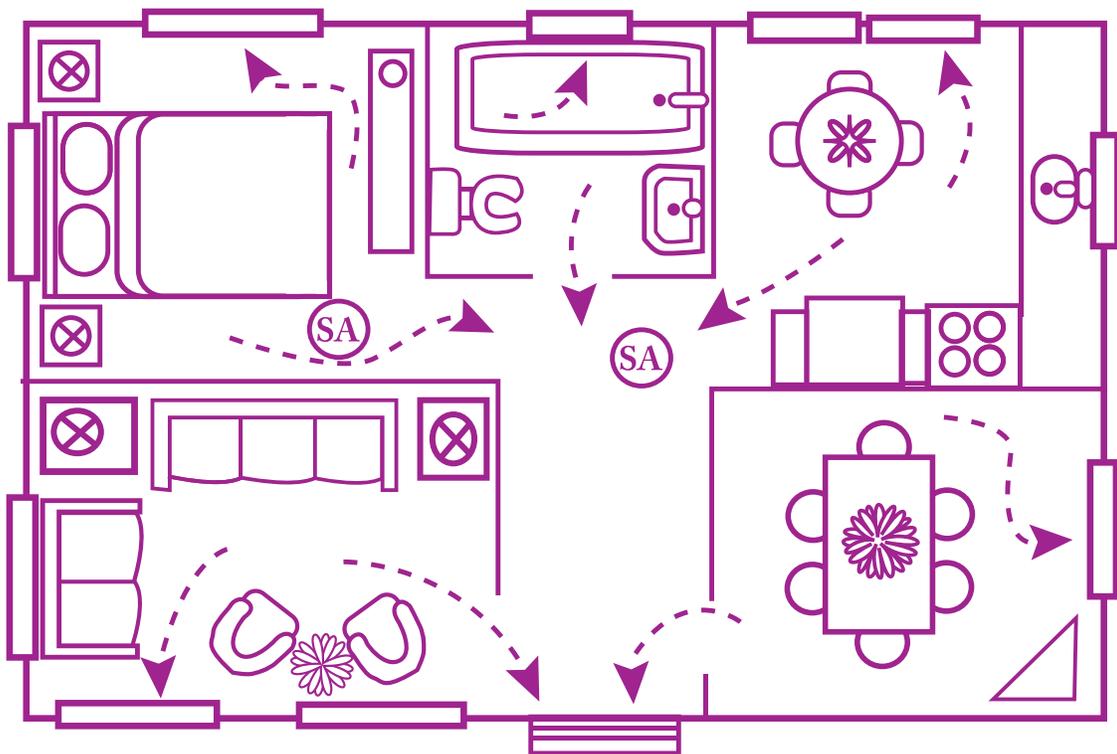


Home Escape Plans

Plan Ahead! If a fire breaks out in your home, you may only have a few minutes to get out safely once the smoke alarm sounds. Everyone needs to know what to do and where to go if there is a fire.

- Make a home escape plan. Draw a map of your home showing all doors and windows. Discuss the plan with everyone in your home.
- Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible. Make sure all doors and windows leading outside open easily.
- Have an outside meeting place (like a tree, light pole, or mailbox) a safe distance from the home where everyone should meet.
- Practice your home fire drill at night and during the day with everyone in your home, twice a year.

- Practice different ways out.
- Teach children how to escape on their own in case you can't help them.
- Close doors behind you as you leave.
- If an alarm sounds, **GET OUT AND STAY OUT**. Never go back inside for people or pets.
- If you have to escape through smoke, **GET LOW AND GO UNDER** the smoke to find your way out.
- Call 911 from outside your home.



Meeting Place

Fire Alarms in Apartment Buildings

Large apartment buildings are built to keep people safe from fire. Fire alarm systems detect smoke and fire, and they will warn residents of danger.



- Everyone in the building should know where to find the manual fire alarm pull stations.
- If there is a fire, pull the alarm on your way out.
- Leave the building right away if you hear the fire alarm. Stay outside at your meeting place until you are told that it is safe to return.
- Treat every fire alarm as an emergency. When the alarm sounds, get outside.

Escape 101

- Know the location of all exit stairs from your floor. If the nearest staircase is blocked by fire or smoke, you may have to use another exit.
- If the fire alarm sounds, feel the door before opening. If it is hot, use another way. If it is cool, use this exit to leave.
- Close all doors behind you as you leave.
- If fire or smoke is blocking all exits, return or stay in your unit. Keep the door closed. Cover cracks with a towel. Call 911 and let them know you are trapped. Signal from a window or a balcony.

Hotel & Motel Safety

Vacations and business travel make hotels and motels our home away from home. It is just as important to be prepared and know what you would do in a hotel/motel emergency, as it is in your own home.

- Choose a hotel/motel that is protected by both smoke alarms and a fire sprinkler system.
- When you enter your room, review the escape plan posted in your room; usually on the back of the door.
- Take time to find the exits and count the number of doors between your room and the exit.
- Keep your room key by your bed and take it with you if there is a fire.
- If the alarm sounds, leave right away, closing all doors behind you. Use the stairs – never use elevators during a fire.
- If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke.

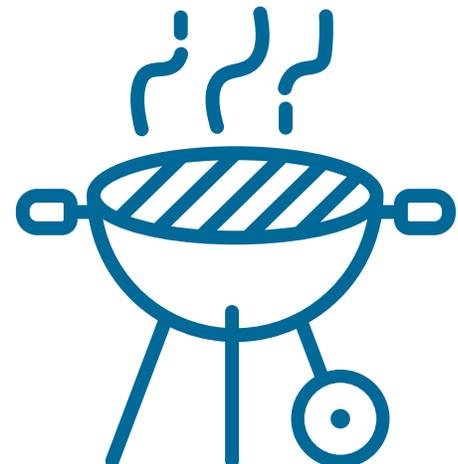
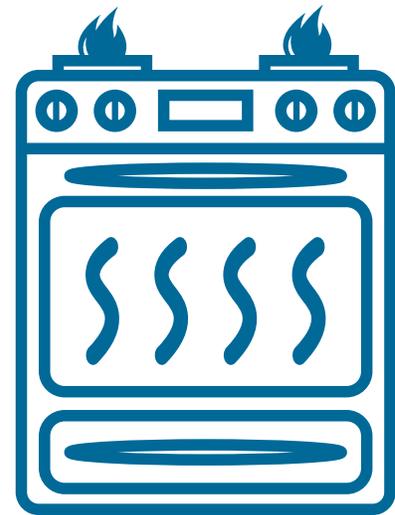
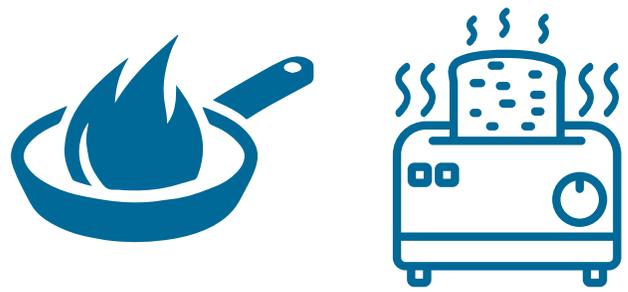


Safety in the Home

Cooking Safety

Cooking can bring family and friends together, but did you know cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home injuries?

- Unattended cooking is the leading cause of kitchen fires.
- Most cooking fires in the home involve the stove.
- Cook with caution, be alert; if you are sleepy do not use the stove.
- Stay in the kitchen while frying, grilling, or broiling food; if leaving the kitchen even for a short time, turn off the stove.
- Keep anything that can catch fire away from the stovetop, e.g. oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packing, towels, or curtains.
- When simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food:
 - check food regularly
 - remain in the home
 - use a timer to remind you that you are cooking



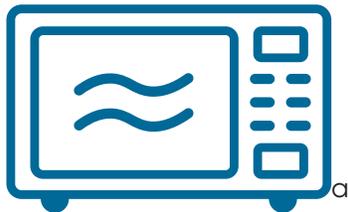
Scald Prevention

A scald injury can happen at any age. Children, older adults, and people with disabilities are especially at risk. Scald burns are one of the leading causes of all burn injuries.

- Teach children that hot things can burn.
- Place hot liquids and food at the centre of the table or towards the back of the counter.
- Have a kids-free zone; at least 1 metre (3 feet) around the **stove and areas where hot food/drink is prepared or carried.**
- Never hold a child while cooking.
- If you do get burned, treat immediately:
 - using cool water for 5 - 10 minutes
 - get medical help if needed

Microwaves

With busy lives, families rely on the microwave as a quick way to heat up a meal, warm up drink, or defrost dinner.



While the convenience of the microwave is something we take for granted, safety should not be.

- Purchase a microwave that is CSA approved.
- Plug microwaves directly into wall outlets; never use an extension cord.
- Open microwaved food slowly, away from your face; hot steam or food can cause burns.
- Position the microwave at a safe height.
- Microwaved food heats unevenly; stir and test food before eating or giving to children.
- Only use microwave-safe food containers or dishes. Never use aluminum foil or metal in a microwave.
- If you have a fire in the microwave, leave the door closed, turn it off, and unplug it from the wall. If the fire does not go out, get outside and call 911.

Superheated Water

- Microwaves can superheat water beyond its boiling point.
- Water expands approximately 1,700 times as it turns into steam. This will create pressure in the microwave. The pressure inside the microwave acts on the surface of the water, not allowing it to release the steam bubbles.
- When the pressure is removed, anything that breaks the surface tension of the water such as a splash, a spoon, adding sugar or instant coffee, will cause the water to boil rapidly and violently. This happens because the water releases all of its heat energy, all at once. This situation creates a potential burn hazard to the individual holding, moving, or adding something to the container/mug.

Candle Safety

Candles may be pretty to look at but they are a cause of home fires.

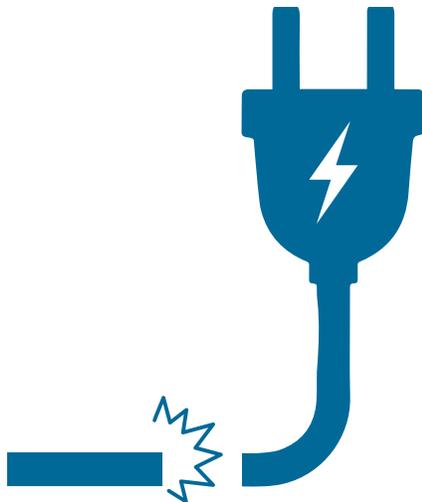
- Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Avoid the use of candles in the bedroom and other areas where people may fall asleep.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.
- Use candle holders that are sturdy and won't tip over easily.
- Use candle holders on a sturdy and uncluttered surface.
- Light candles carefully. Keep your hair and any loose clothing away from the flames.
- Don't burn a candle all the way down – put it out before it gets too close to the holder or container.
- Have flashlights and battery-powered lighting ready for use during a power outage. Never use candles.



Clothes Dryers

Doing laundry is part of our everyday routine. But did you know how important taking care of your clothes dryer is to the safety of your home? The leading cause of dryer fires is failure to clean them.

- Have your dryer installed and serviced by a professional.
- Do not use the dryer without a lint filter.
- Make sure you clean the lint filter before or after each load of laundry.
- Rigid or flexible metal venting material should be used to sustain proper airflow and drying time.
- Make sure the air exhaust/vent pipe is not restricted and the outdoor vent flap will open when the dryer is operating. Once a year, or more often if you notice that it is taking longer than normal for your clothes to dry, clean lint out of the vent pipe or have a dryer lint removal service do it for you.
- Turn the dryer off if you leave the home or when you go to bed.
- Keep the area around your dryer clear of things that can burn like boxes, cleaning supplies, and clothing.



Electrical

Flipping a light on, plugging in a coffeemaker, charging a laptop are all second nature to us. Electricity makes our lives easier, however we need to be cautious and keep safety in mind.

- Have all electrical work done by a qualified electrician.
- When you are buying a home have it inspected by a qualified inspector.
- Only use one heat-producing appliance (coffeemaker, toaster, space heater, etc.) plugged into a receptacle outlet at a time.
- Major appliances (refrigerator, dryers, washers, stoves, air conditioners, etc.) should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet. Extension cords and power bars should not be used.
- Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to reduce the risk of shock. GFCIs shut off the electrical circuit when it becomes a shock hazard. They should be installed inside the home in bathrooms, kitchens, garages, and basements. All outdoor receptacles should be GFCI protected.
- Check electrical cords to make sure they are not running across doorways or under carpets. Extension cords are intended for temporary use. Have a qualified electrician add more receptacle outlets so you don't have to use extensions cords.
- Use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or fixture.
- Call an electrician if you have frequent problems with blowing fuses, a tingling feeling when you touch a electrical appliance, warm wall outlets, a burning or rubbery smell coming from an appliance, flickering or dimming lights, or sparks from an outlet.

Portable Space Heaters

When the weather turns cold, it can bring a chill into our homes.

Portable space heaters have become a popular way to supplement central heating or heat one room.



- Purchase a heater that has a seal from a testing laboratory.
- Keep the heater at least 1 metre (3 feet) away from anything that can burn, including people.
- Choose a heater with a thermostat and overheat protection.
- Place the heater on a solid, flat surface.
- Make sure your heater has an automatic shut-off to turn the heater off if it tips over.
- Keep the heater out of the way of foot traffic and never block an exit.
- Keep children away from the heater.
- Heaters should be turned off and unplugged when you leave the room or go to bed.

Heating

There is something about the winter months, and curling up with a good book by the fireplace – but did you know that heating equipment is one of the leading causes of homefire deaths?

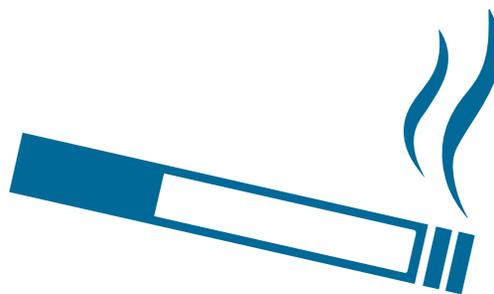


- Keep anything that can burn at least 1 metre (3 feet) from heating equipment like a furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or space heater.
- Have a 1 metre (3 feet) “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use an oven to heat your house.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary heating equipment or water heaters.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cooled before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.

Smoking

Smoking materials cause structure fires, injuries, and deaths. Smoking material fires are preventable.

- If you smoke, use only fire-safe cigarettes.
- If you smoke – smoke outside. Most deaths result from fires that started in living rooms, family rooms, dens, or bedrooms.
- Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, and other smoking materials up high, out of the reach of children.
- Use a deep, sturdy ashtray. Place it away from anything that can burn.
- Do not discard cigarettes in vegetation such as mulch, potted plants, landscaping, peat moss, dried grasses, leaves, or other things that could ignite easily.
- Before throwing away butts and ashes, make sure they are out; dousing them in water or sand is the best way to do that.
- Never smoke and never allow anyone to smoke where medical oxygen is used. Medical oxygen can cause materials to ignite quicker and make fires burn at a faster rate.
- Electronic cigarettes – fires have occurred while e-cigarettes were being used, the battery was being charged, or the device was being transported. Never leave e-cigarettes charging unattended. E-cigarettes should be used with caution.



Miscellaneous Fire Safety

Fire Safety during Winter

Winter storms can happen almost anywhere, and they can cause problems. You need to know what to do before, during, and after a storm. There are more home fires during the winter than any other season. Half of which occur between December and February.

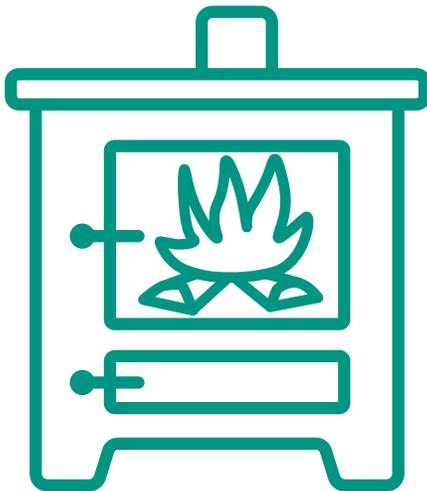
- Test all smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
 - Plan two ways out of your house in case of an emergency. Clear the driveway and front walk of ice and snow. This will provide easy access to your home.
 - Make sure your house number can be seen from the street. If you need help, firefighters will be able to find you.
 - Be ready in case the power goes out. Have flashlights on hand. Also have battery-powered lighting and fresh batteries. Never use candles.
- Stay aware of the weather. Listen to the television or radio for updates.
 - Check on neighbours and others who may need help.
 - Generators should be used outdoors. Keep them away from windows and doors. Do not run a generator inside your garage even if the door is open.
 - Stay away from downed wires.
 - Be ready if the heat stops working. Use extra blankets and layers of clothes to stay warm. If you use an emergency heat source, keep anything that can burn at least 1 metre (3 feet) away.
 - Turn portable heaters off when you leave the room. And, turn them off when you go to bed.



Wood & Pellet Stoves

As the temperature drops outside, wood and pellet stoves may be fired up inside the home.

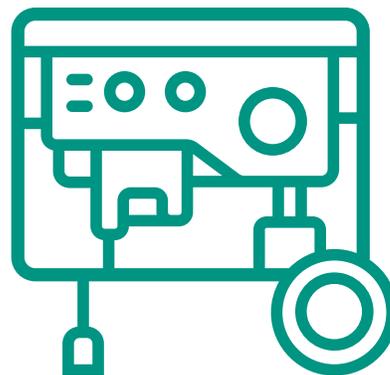
- Have a qualified professional install stoves, chimney connectors, and chimneys.
- Stoves should display an independent testing laboratory label.
- In wood stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood pellets.
- Have your chimney and stove inspected and cleaned by a certified chimney sweep every fall, just before heating season.
- Clean the inside of your stove periodically using a wire brush.
- Allow ashes to cool before disposing of them. Place ashes in a covered metal container. Keep the container at least 3 metres (10 feet) away from the home and other buildings.
- Keep a close eye on children whenever a wood or pellet stove is used. Remind them to stay at least 1 metre (3 feet) away from the stove.
- Install a carbon monoxide alarm outside each sleeping area and on every level of the house. For best protection, interconnect the CO alarms. When one sounds, they all sound.

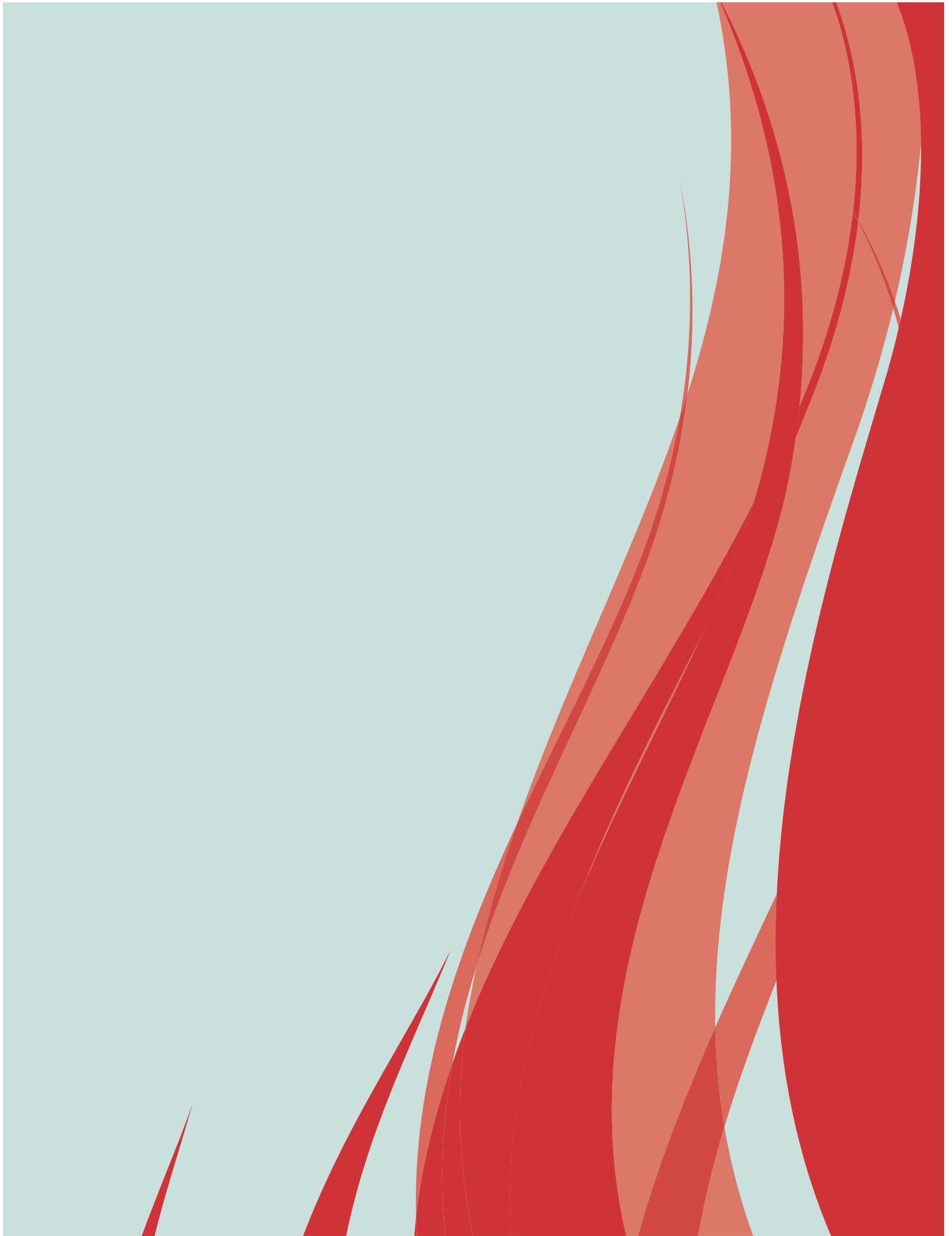


Generators

Downed wires, heavy snow fall, or summer storms can all lead to power outages. Many people turn to a portable generator for a temporary solution.

- Generators should be used in a well-ventilated location, outside away from all doors, windows, and vent openings.
- Never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open.
- Place generators so exhaust fumes cannot enter the home through windows, doors, or other openings in the building.
- Turn off generators and let them cool down before refueling. Never refuel a generator while it is hot.
- Store fuel for the generator in a container that is intended for the purpose, and label the container clearly.





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