



## REDUCING RISK FIRE PREVENTION TIPS

*Many ordinary, everyday household items can be fire hazards. Think about these statistics for a minute before reading any further.*

Cooking fires are the #1 cause of home fires and injuries, resulting in over 300 deaths annually, 400 injuries and over \$5 million in property damages. Hundreds more deaths and thousands more injuries are caused by children playing with matches, lighters, candles, cigarettes and other dangerous materials. Clothes dryers & Washing machines lead to over 15,970 fires a year with over 444 injuries, almost 13 deaths and over \$238 million in property damage. Candles are responsible for up to 8,760 residential fires with almost 82 deaths, 800 injuries and \$295 million in property loss, mostly due to candles being left unattended.

Now look around your home. Are any of these risk factors present? While we aren't trying to scare you, we do want you to be aware of potential fire hazards in your home. Now that you are, here are some simple steps to take to reduce those risks and have a safer home.

### Cooking Safety

- Create a 3-foot, kid-free zone around your stove.
  - Never leave anything on the stove or in the microwave unattended.
  - Keep cooking areas free of combustible materials such as towels, grocery bags, curtains, etc.
  - Turn pot handles inward to prevent bumping.
  - Always keep a pot holder, oven mitt and lid handy.
  - Never pour water on a grease fire - smother it.
  - Never discharge a fire extinguisher into a pan.
  - When in doubt, get out of the house and call your local fire department.
- If you have a small cooking (grease) fire and decide to fight the fire...**
- **Stovetop** - Smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
  - **Oven** - Turn off the heat and keep the door closed.



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## Clothes Dryers

- Do not run your dryer without a lint filter. Clean the filter between every use and remove lint from around the drum.
- Make sure your dryer is plugged into an outlet that can handle its electrical needs.
- Turn off your dryer when you leave the home – do not let it run while you are gone.
- Keep your dryer area clean and free of combustible materials (boxes, clothes, garbage, lint, etc.)
- Have your dryer installed by a professional and have gas powered dryers regularly inspected to ensure that the gas lines and connections are correct.

## Children

- Teach your children the dangers of playing with lighters and matches; and, to tell an adult if they find matches, lighters or if they see another child playing with fire.
- Never play with fire in front of children, they may think it's a game.
- Store lighters, matches and other smoking materials up high in a locked cupboard.
- Be aware that children who start fires may be reaching out, they may be in a crisis situation. If you suspect that a child you know may be starting fires, call your local fire department, school or counseling agency to get help for the child as soon as possible.

## Extension Cords

- Extension cords are for temporary use, not long term. Consider a surge protector for prolonged needs.
- Make sure all cords are in good condition and not frayed or cut.
- Do not overload extension cords. Read the ratings label to see specifications.
- Do not place cords where they can be rubbed by furniture or doors.
- Always check the wattage in light bulbs to make sure you are using the correct bulbs in light fixtures to prevent overheating.
- Never use a larger size fuse or circuit breakers, they can be a significant fire hazard.
- Check outlets and light switches for heat. If they are unusually hot, you may have a problem with your wiring, call a licensed electrician to check as soon as possible.

## Candles

- Extinguish all lit items when you leave a room, the home, or go to bed.
- Keep away from flammable items, including clothing, curtains, papers, decorations or plants.
- Don't put candles in windows where a breeze can ignite objects near the candle.
- Do not place lit items low where they can be knocked over by children or pets.
- Store matches, lighters, incense and candles high up where children can't reach.

- Use only approved candle holders and incense stands - never plates or ashtrays.
- Keep wicks trimmed and free of matches or old wick clippings.
- Do not play with candles with small children, teach them that they are hot and can burn them.

## Camping & Fireworks

- Set up your campfire downwind from tents, and far enough away to prevent sparks from igniting combustibles.
- Use tents that are flame retardant.
- Do not use liquid-filled lanterns or heaters inside the tent – battery powered lights are best.
- Store fire starters away from tents and only use dry kindling for fires.
- Always extinguish fires when leaving the area or going to bed.
- Stay at least 500 feet away from professional firework displays.
- Leave any area where amateurs are using illegal fireworks.
- If you find fireworks, contact authorities for proper removal/disposal.
- Don't let small children play with firecrackers or sparklers.
- Be aware that fireworks can cause burns, lacerations, dismemberment and blindness.



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