

FIRE FACTS

Fire is an ever-present danger in your home. Whether it is from a candle, fire place or electrical wiring source, being prepared for the possibility of a fire in your home is critical.

- In 2004 there were 395,500 house fires in the United States.
- In 2004 3,190 people lost their lives as a result of house fires.
- Nearly one-third of those lives were lost due to smoking-related fires.
- Cooking is the most common cause of house fires.
- In 2003, residential fires caused more than \$6 billion in property damage losses.
- Approximately half of all deaths from fire were in homes that did not have a smoke alarms.
- The majority of house fires happened during the winter months.
- Wood stoves are attributed as the cause of almost 11,000 residential fires each year.
- Electrical fires are blamed for 67,800 fires annually.
- Approximately 14,000 fires are linked to clothes dryers.
- Fires caused by holiday decorations injure about 2,600 people every year.
- It is estimated that 96-percent of U.S. homes have smoke alarms installed.
- Only about 23-percent of homes have an escape plan should a fire happen.

Also available in the personal and family preparedness series is:

Booklet:

A Guide to Preparedness

Pamphlet:

A Personal and Family Preparedness Plan

Brochures:

Preparing for a Winter Storm

Preparing for a Fire

Preparing for a Flood

Preparing for a Tornado

Preparing a First Aid and Supply Kit

Bird Flu: What You Should Know

This brochure is a publication of the
Ross County Health District's
COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS
Program staff.

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Preparing for a FIRE

Your Guide to Being Ready... Just in Case



Courtesy of the



FIREPROOFING YOUR HOME

Although there is no way to make your home 100-percent fire proof, there are many things you can do to reduce the risk of a fire in your home.

- Don't overload outlets.
- Check electrical cords on all appliances.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.
- Never leave a candle or other open flame burn when going to sleep.
- Make sure to use the correct wattage bulbs with lamps and appliances.
- Don't store anything near heat sources, whether permanent or temporary.
- Have your furnace serviced annually and replace filters regularly.
- Have your chimney checked before using a fireplace or woodstove.
- Keep stove-tops clean from grease and oil.
- Keep curtains or other flammable items clear from hot cooking surfaces.
- Unplug items such as curling irons and hair dryers when they are not in use.
- Service clothes dryers regularly and keep lint traps clean.
- Appliances that have three-prong plugs should be used in a three-prong outlets.
- If a smoker lives in the home, make sure to check sofas, chairs and carpets for possible burning ashes before going to bed. Make sure to install a smoke detector in a smoker's bedroom, and it's even a good idea to have detectors in all bedrooms.
- Install smoke detectors on every floor of your home.

YOUR PLAN

Every home and apartment should have an escape plan.

- Draw a floor-plan of your home, marking exits and exit routes.
- Get with your family and practice the plan.
- You should identify two exits from every room.
- Keep escape routes clear; make sure doors and windows have quick release latches.
- Make sure to select a meeting place once outside of the home.
- Make sure upper floor rooms have a ladder or other emergency device for window exit.
- No one should sleep in a basement or attic with only one means of escape, especially kids.
- If you live in an apartment building know the escape plan.

SMOKE DETECTORS

- Install a smoke detector on every level of the home (including attics and basements).
- Test them regularly (once a month) and replace batteries as needed.
- Since smoke rises, detectors should be placed on ceilings (4-inches from the wall), or on the wall (4-12-inches from the ceiling).
- Never paint them.
- Don't install them near doors or windows, where a draft might affect their function.
- Replace detectors about every 10 years.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

There are a number of different types of fire extinguishers for the home.

- Although fire extinguishers come in Class A, B and C, it is possible to purchase a multipurpose one designated as ABC, which will extinguish all types of flames.
- Place the extinguisher in the kitchen, near a door.
- Extinguishers work only on small fires; in the event of a large fire, get out and call the fire department.
- Familiarize yourself and your family with the extinguisher. If you have to use it, keep the fire in front of you and an exit to your back. Spray the extinguisher back and forth at the base of the fire.

HOLIDAY & WINTER FIRE SAFETY

- For the holidays, if using a live tree, select one that is fresh, and water it regularly. Also, make sure lights and other decorations are in good working order and no wires are frayed. Never place it near a heat source.
- Make sure candles are in a stable holder and place them where they cannot be knocked over. Never go to bed and leave candles lit.
- All items should be kept three feet from space heaters. Rooms with kerosene heaters should be well ventilated. If burning wood in a fireplace, use a fire screen.