

# Fire Prevention and Safety Tips

It's a terrible statistic, but fires kill more Americans each year than all natural disasters combined. Take a few minutes during Fire Prevention Week to brush up on your fire prevention and safety know-how.

## Use smoke alarms:

- Properly working smoke alarms can reduce your chances of dying in a fire by nearly 50%. Put one on every level of your home, outside sleeping areas – and in each bedroom if you keep the doors closed.
- Test smoke alarms monthly and replace batteries yearly – or as soon as you hear a low-battery noise.
- Replace your smoke alarms every 10 years. Install interconnected ones – by wire or wireless signal – if possible so when one sounds, they all do.
- If you need help paying for smoke alarms, contact the American Red Cross at 800-RED-CROSS to be connected to your local Red Cross Chapter.

## When you cook:

- Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling or broiling food – and in the house when simmering, baking, roasting or broiling food.
- Keep the stove area clean and clear of potholders, towels – anything that can catch fire.
- If a fire starts in a pan, slide a lid over the burning pan and turn off the burner. Don't move it and let it cool completely. Never pour water on grease fires.
- Baking soda or salt might smother *very small* grease fires. But be careful not to grab flour, baking powder or other lookalikes – they'll make the fire worse.

## Around the house:

- Make sure your heater is clean and in good working order.
- Turn off a portable heater when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Don't overload electrical outlets or extension cords.
- If your power is out, use flashlights, not candles.
- Never leave a lit candle unattended. Use battery-operated flameless candles instead.
- Security bars on windows or doors should also have quick-release devices on them.
- Keep an escape ladder on upper floors.



## If you have kids or grandkids:

- Keep matches and lighters up high, preferably in a locked cabinet. Use lighters with child-resistant features.
- Teach kids what the smoke alarms sound like – and what to do when they hear them.
- Emphasize to children to get out and stay out if there's ever a fire. Let them know only professional firefighters should enter a building that's on fire.
- All family members should be taught to stop, drop and roll if their clothes catch on fire.

## If you have pets:

- Keep pets off cooking surfaces and countertops.
- Pets are curious. Never leave them alone with an open flame, even the one in your fireplace.
- When practicing your escape plan, take your pets with you. See if you can train them to come to you when you call. But don't delay escape or endanger yourself or family to rescue your pets.
- Put a pet alert sign or window cling to a front window so firefighters might be able to locate them.

## If you smoke:

- Smoke outside, and never smoke when you're drowsy, medicated, or if anyone in the home is using oxygen.

## If you have a fire:

- Yell, "fire" several times.
- Get out, stay out and call 9-1-1.

For more information, visit the American Red Cross at [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) or the National Safety Council at [nsc.org](http://nsc.org). To help children learn about fire safety, visit Operation Edith at [operationedith.com](http://operationedith.com).



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