



# Fire Safety

TIPS AND ESCAPE PLANNER

“ We have to have focused education and advocacy. We have reoriented ourselves to focus our education and outreach efforts on the leading causes of fire and where the losses are occurring. **The majority of fire deaths are happening in the place people feel safest – their homes.** And we see the majority of fire ground firefighter injuries in homes. When we are successful, we will not see two year olds dying in fires in newly constructed homes. ”

Jim Pauley, *President*  
National Fire Protection Association  
2015 President's Report



## IS IT POSSIBLE TO **Prevent Home Fires?**

Fire safety education and awareness are the first step to help save lives. Help make your community a safer place by getting involved... ask neighbors if they have smoke alarms, practice evacuation plans and encourage others to do the same.

Unfortunately, all homes are vulnerable to fire; there are ways, however, to lessen the threat. Every home should feature working smoke alarms. 65% of house fire deaths occur in homes with no working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms are extremely easy to install and can double your chance of survival. It is important to test smoke alarms monthly and replace the battery as needed. Besides smoke alarms, it is critical to prepare a response to a disaster like a home fire. People with a home fire evacuation plan can maximize the minutes they have to get out.



## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT **Home Fires?**

Fires happen regardless of your geographic location or personal background. Home fires cause devastation through property damage, injury and death. Each year, more than 3,400 Americans die as a result of fire. More than 2,500 of these deaths occur in home fires.

Don't become a statistic. Help to prevent a home fire from causing chaos in your life by becoming aware of household hazards, preparing an evacuation plan and eliminating fire risks in and around your home. Use this informative booklet from Guardian to learn more about how home fires start, how to create an evacuation plan and safety checklist, what to do if you are caught in a home fire, how to use a fire extinguisher and what to do after a home fire.

## WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE AND

# How Quickly Can a Fire Spread?

- Although fire starts off bright, it quickly produces black smoke and darkness and therefore, fire can actually be pitch black
- It only takes a minute for thick, black smoke to fill a house
- A small flame can turn into a major fire in less than 30 seconds
- In just two minutes, a fire can become life-threatening
- The heat is extremely dangerous and inhaling the hot air will scorch your lungs
- The heat is so intense it can melt your clothes and skin
- The smoke and toxic gasses kill more people than flames

According to NFPA, following the introduction of the affordable home smoke alarm, U.S. home fire deaths have been reduced by 53 percent over the past three and a half decades.

## HOME FIRE

# Quick Facts

- 80% of American's don't realize that home fires are the single most common disaster across the nation and only 26% of families have actually developed and practiced a home fire escape plan
- Each year, more than 12,600 are injured from home fires
- Nationally, the number of home fires is on the rise
- Children under the age of 5 and adults over 65 are more than twice more likely to die in a home fire than the rest of the US population
- High rise fires cause more injuries and damage than all other structural fires
- Each year, over 200 people die from carbon monoxide produced fuel burning appliances in the home
- Together, sprinklers and smoke alarms cut your risk of dying in a home fire by 82%- in relation to having neither

# Top 8 Causes

## OF HOUSE FIRES

### 1. **Cooking Equipment**

Cooking is the leading cause of home structure fires and home fire injury. Overall, cooking accounted for two of every five reported home fires and reported home fire injuries. Unattended cooking is the leading contributing factor in these fires and injuries.

### 2. **Heating Equipment**

Heating is responsible for many of the home fires that are reported during the months of December, January and February.

### 3. **Cigarette Smoking**

Smoking is the leading cause of civilian fire deaths. Every year, almost 1,000 smokers and non-smokers are killed in home fires caused by cigarettes and other smoking materials.

### 4. **Electrical & Inadequate Wiring**

Electrical failure or malfunction is a leading cause of home fires. Don't overload electrical outlets. Protective exterior wires carry a hot current which can catch fire when the wire is frayed. Be aware of your outlets, wiring and electric.

### 5. **Candles**

Most home candle fires start in the bedroom. Candle fires start when a candle lights a burnable item, such as a mattress or bedding. The top three days for home candle fires are Christmas, New Year's Day and Christmas Eve.

### 6. **Children Playing with Fire**

Younger children are more likely to start fires in the home, while older children tend to start fires outdoors. Keep lighters, matches and heat sources away from children.

### 7. **Christmas Trees and Holiday Decorations**

A heat source too close to the Christmas tree causes fires. Holiday lights and other decorations with line voltage create home fires

### 8. **Flammable Liquids**

Combustible liquids can catch fire and burn easily at normal temperatures. Many common products and fuels are combustible.

# Fire Safety Checklist

In preparation for the unthinkable, find and remove fire hazards from your home. Take the necessary steps now. They can help to save your life!

- Check electrical appliances for loose or frayed wires.
  - Check outlets. They should never be overloaded with plugs.
  - Have lamps and nightlights stand alone. They should not touch any fabric.
  - Use the correct bulb wattage for your light fixtures.
  - Turn off electrical blankets and appliances when not in use.
  - Supervise children in the kitchen and around cooking equipment.
  - Keep candles out of reach of children and pets.
  - Have your furnace or heating system inspected annually.
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## Space Heaters:

- Keep out of walk ways.
  - Keep away from children and pets.
  - Place at a safe distance from your bed, fabrics and flammable items.
  - Unplug when not in use.
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## In The Kitchen:

- Never leave kitchen equipment unattended when in use.
  - Turn off and unplug appliances.
  - Repair or replace appliances that spark, smell or easily overheat.
  - Do not wear loose clothing when cooking.
  - Do not cook when you are sleepy or drowsy. Cooking requires attention.
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## Home Escape:

- Practice your fire escape plan.
- Have two ways out of each room.
- Once you're out of the house, stay out.
- Know where to meet after you escape.



## DOES EVERYONE KNOW WHAT THE **Fire Evacuation Plan**

Fires are unpredictable which is why having an evacuation plan is so important. Get the whole family involved in fire safety preparations. Discuss with your children what to do in a fire emergency and practice your evacuation plan at least twice a year.

When you test your fire evacuation plan, try it in daylight and at night. You should even practice feeling your way out of the house by crawling with your eyes closed. Explain to your children that they should never hide from firefighters.

Be prepared! Ask yourself: Does everyone know what the smoke or fire alarm signal sounds like? Are there two ways out of every room? Are escape paths clear? Are doors and windows easy to open? Where will you meet outside? Think of everything ahead of time so if an emergency happens you can get out of the house immediately. Don't risk your life by going back into the house.





## MY HOME IS ON FIRE!

# What Do I Do?

If a fire occurs while you are in the house, don't waste any time. Get out as soon as you can. Follow your escape plan and be aware of the heat and smoke around you. The more quickly you can react, the more chance you have of escaping safely. When in a house fire, protect yourself from inhaling smoke. Smoke inhalation causes you to become disoriented or even unconscious. Cover your face when going through a room heavily filled with smoke.

- **Follow your escape plan!** When the smoke alarms sound, get out; you only have seconds to escape safely! Smoke is toxic and rises, so get low and crawl to your exit.
- If your first exit is blocked by smoke or if the doorknob is too hot, leave it and find your way to the second exit. If you open a door, open it slowly. Be ready to shut a door quickly in case heavy smoke is present on the other side.
- If a person or a pet is inside and needs assistance, **get out first**, and then call 9-1-1 and tell the operator where the person or pet is located.
- If you cannot **escape the fire**, close the door and cover the vents in the room and door cracks with wet cloth or tape in an attempt to keep the smoke out. Call 9-1-1 and tell them where you are. Signal for help through the window with a flashlight or light colored clothing.

Planning ahead for a fire emergency can be life-saving!

# Talk to Your Children

## ABOUT HOME FIRE

Teach your kids about risks involved with lighters, matches, candles, fireworks and cigarettes. Make them aware that playing with these items is dangerous. Smoke inhalation can cause you to become disoriented or even unconscious.

Keep matches, lighters and other ignitable substances away from your children. Teach children to tell an adult if they find any of these dangerous materials.

Talk to your kids about what to do if a fire occurs. Be sure that they understand that firefighters are part of the community; they are "safe strangers" who will help them. Educate your kids on fire awareness and preparation so that they feel confident about what to do in the worst case scenario.

“ The grease fire had already spread to the wall and cabinets, and the fire department is a long way off. I put a lid on the flaming pan, pressed the Guardian keypad and started spraying the flames with the **fire extinguisher**. Guardian immediately notified the fire department, and by the time they arrived, I had the fire out. The firemen had to chop through the wall to make sure it wasn't smoldering. One of the firemen said that **if I hadn't acted quickly, we probably would have lost the house.** ”

Mary Lou F.

Real Guardian Customer Story  
Pittsburgh PA



## USING A **Fire Extinguisher**

Only use a fire extinguisher if: the fire is contained to a small area, the fire is not growing, if the room is not filled with smoke, everyone has exited the building and the fire department has been called.

When operating a fire extinguisher, remember the word PASS.

- P** Pull the pin and hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you.
- A** Aim low. Point the extinguisher toward the base of the fire.
- S** Squeeze the lever slowly.
- S** Sweep the nozzle from side-to-side.



## THE NEXT STEPS

# After A Fire

Recovering from a home fire is physically and emotionally challenging. Being injured, losing property and valuables, or even losing loved ones can be the all real-life results of a home fire. Recovering can be exhausting. Look to your community for support and be cautious when you return home. Check with the fire department to see if and when your residence is safe to enter.

- Contact your local disaster relief group.
- Contact your insurance company, landlord or mortgage company, utility and security providers
- The fire department will tell you if your utilities are safe to use. If not, the firefighters will turn them off.
- Try to find valuables like documents and records. Conduct an inventory of damaged items and property.
- If you have to vacate your home, let the police department know.
- Let your family and friends know you're safe!

# Take Action....

## INSTALL A MONITORED SECURITY AND FIRE ALARM SYSTEM SYSTEM

- More fire related deaths occur between 11pm – 7am, when the majority of people are asleep.
- Monitored fire detection systems allow firefighters to be alerted, even if you are out of the house or fast asleep.
- Guardian Protection Services installs smoke alarms and heat detectors that are always monitored, whether your security system is armed or not.
- Monitored Heat Detectors: In areas where a smoke detector may not be practical – such as a furnace room, kitchen or laundry room – these devices detect, within their range, high levels of ambient heat. They can offer a warning to a possible fire and send a signal to the Guardian 24-hour monitoring center who can notify firefighters.
- Monitored Photoelectric Smoke Detectors: These are particularly effective for identifying within their range of detection, abnormally high levels of heat associated with even small smoldering fires before they get out of control. As part of a Guardian monitored fire detection system, they can help reduce damage from a fire.





While providing home and business security systems to more than a quarter-million clients in the U.S., Guardian Protection partners with communities by offering free educational safety brochures, child fingerprinting events and crime watch signs. Founded in 1950, Guardian is a U.S. top-ten-ranked security systems firm and was named security Dealer of the Year by respected industry journal SDM in 1999 and 2013.

For more information on home security call: 1.800.PROTECT (1.800.776.8328)

For more information on our community partnership programs,  
please contact [community@guardianprotection.com](mailto:community@guardianprotection.com)

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