



## FIRE SAFETY

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Fires can cause a lot of damage—both to you and your home! U.S. fire departments respond to an average of more than 300,000 home fires a year. Some of the top causes are candles, cooking, faulty electrical wires, and heating systems. Follow these tips to do everything you can to ensure that your home doesn't become a statistic.

Includes:

Home Fire Escape

Smoke Detectors

Home Sprinklers Systems

Fire Extinguishers

Additional Resources

### *Home Fire Escape*

It's important to know what your family will do in the event of a fire. You probably watched videos on this in grade school about having a plan—and for good reason!

Sit down with your family and make an escape plan. The National Fire Protection Association recommends you know at least two ways to escape every room in your home. Your children should know how to escape on their own, in case a fire separates you from them. It's especially important to plan feasible escape routes for people in your home with disabilities. You should set a meeting point outside—something permanent like a street sign or a tree—that's a safe distance from your home.

Make sure everyone in your home knows how to call 911. Also remember that it is never safe for you to re-enter a burning building—that's the firefighters' jobs, and you should let them do what they're trained for. A home fire can be scary, but if everyone is prepared and knows what to do in an emergency, you'll greatly reduce your family's chances of injury or death.

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### *Smoke Detectors*

Smoke detectors are the most common way to prevent home fires. City code dictates that every home must have a smoke detector. The code also says those detectors must be regularly maintained by cleaning them and replacing their batteries. That is to say, your smoke detector has to *work*.

Having a working smoke detector in your home is in your best interest, too. Smoke detectors make it easier to keep your family safe by alerting you to smoke—and therefore fire—before it's too late. They cut the risk of dying in a home fire in half. It's good for your neighbors, too, because if your home catches fire, it might spread. Interconnecting your smoke detectors, either by a qualified electrician or installing battery-operated wireless interconnected alarms, is especially important if your home is large or you sleep with the doors closed.

If anyone in your household is deaf or hard of hearing, be sure that your smoke alarms accommodate them. Whether this includes flashing strobe lights, a shaking bed, or some other form of alarm is up to you, but it's important to be sure that everyone in your home will be warned properly should a fire start.

Remember—a smoke detector only detects the smoke; it doesn't do anything about it. If your alarm goes off, the safest thing to do is call 911.

### *Home Sprinkler Systems*

Home sprinkler systems are useful because they will reduce the heat, flames, and smoke of an active fire. This will allow you more time to safely exit your home while you wait on the fire department to arrive. Sprinkler systems can also significantly reduce the water damage done to your home, because if the fire's small enough, they'll be able to put it out and the firefighters won't need to use a hose.

A qualified contractor can install a sprinkler system in your home, but—like smoke detectors—they require regular maintenance and checks to ensure they're still working.



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Used in conjunction with smoke detectors, home sprinkler systems help prevent fires and save lives.

### *Fire Extinguishers*

While firefighting should always be left to the professionals, fire extinguishers can help put out small fires or allow you time to escape. You should only use a fire extinguisher if you are trained to do so, and you should never use a fire extinguisher to try to control a fire. Children should never be trained or allowed to use fire extinguishers.

Keep your fire extinguisher in the place mostly likely for fire to start. For most homes, this is the kitchen. You should not have to travel up or down stairs to reach it.

If you're trained to use a fire extinguisher, before using it you should make sure that 1) everyone else is leaving the home 2) someone is calling 911 3) the fire is small, contained, and not spreading and 4) you have a clear escape route and will not be overcome by smoke or fumes.

### *Additional Resources*

For more information about fire prevention and safety, contact the Kingsport Fire Department for educational resources or see the NFPA's webpage on Public Education [here](#).

For information about fire and fall safety for senior citizens, refer to NFPA's program Remembering When—the program used by the Kingsport Fire Department—at [this link](#).