

FIRE PREVENTION

Many of the leading causes of housing fires are absolutely preventable. Three of the major cause of housing fires are **Unattended Cooking, Candles** and **Smoking Related Incidents**. The following safety tips are easy to follow and could save your life and the lives of your loved ones.

FIRE FACTS

In 2007-2011, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 156,600 home structure fires that involved cooking equipment per year. These fires caused an average of 400 civilian fire deaths, 5,080 civilian fire injuries, and \$853 million in direct property damage. The number of fires has been fairly stable in the past five years.

During 2007-2011, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of 10,630 home structure fires started by candles per year. These fires caused an annual average of 115 civilian deaths, 903 civilian fire injuries, and \$418 million in direct property damage.

In 2011, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 90,000 smoking-material fires in the U.S. These fires resulted in an estimated 540 civilian deaths, 1,640 civilian injuries and \$621 million in direct property damage.

The National Fire Protection Association Recommends the Following Safety Tips

Cooking Safety

Always use cooking equipment tested and approved by a recognized testing facility.

Never leave cooking food on the stovetop unattended, and keep a close eye on food cooking inside the oven.

Keep cooking areas clean and clear of combustibles (e.g. potholders, towels, rags, drapes and food packaging).

Keep children away from cooking areas by enforcing a "kid-free zone" of three feet (1 meter) around the stove. Keep pets from underfoot so you do not trip while cooking. Also, keep pets off cooking surfaces and near by countertops to prevent them from knocking things onto burner.

Wear short, close fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire.

Never use a wet oven mitt, as it presents a scald danger if the moisture in the mitt is heated.

Always keep a potholder, oven mitt and lid handy. If a small fire starts in a pan on the stove, put on an oven mitt and smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan. Turn off the burner. Don't remove the lid until it is completely cool. Never pour water on a grease fire and never discharge a fire extinguisher onto a pan fire, as it can spray and shoot burning grease around the kitchen, actually spreading the fire.

If there is a microwave fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed to prevent flames from burning you and your clothing.

If there is a microwave fire, keep the door closed and unplug the microwave. Call the fire department and make sure to have the oven serviced before you use it again. Food cooked in a microwave can be dangerously hot. Remove the lids or other coverings from microwaved food carefully to prevent steam burns.

Candle Safety

Extinguish all candles when leaving the room or going to sleep.

Keep candles at least 1 foot away from things that can catch fire, like clothing, books and curtains.

Use candle holders that are sturdy, won't tip over easily, are made from a material that cannot burn, and are large enough to collect dripping wax.

Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids.

Keep candle wicks trimmed to one-quarter inch and extinguish taper and pillar candles when they get to within two inches of the holder. Votives and containers should be extinguished before the last half-inch of wax starts to melt.

During power outages, avoid carrying a lit candle. Use flashlights.

The use of candles in the bedrooms and sleeping areas is strongly discouraged.

Smoking Material-Related Safety

If you smoke, smoke outside.

Use deep, wide ashtrays on a sturdy table.

Before you throw out butts and ashes, make sure they are out, and dousing in water or sand is the best way to do that.

Check under furniture cushions and in other places people smoke for cigarette butts that may have fallen out of sight.

Never smoke in a home where oxygen is being used.

If you smoke, choose fire-safe cigarettes. They are less likely to cause fires.

To prevent a deadly cigarette fire, you have to be alert. You won't be if you are sleepy, have been drinking, or have taken medicines or other drugs.

Keep matches and lighters up high, out of children's sight and reach.