



# HOME FIRE PREVENTION BOOKLET

CANADIAN FORCES FIRE MARSHAL

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## Smoke Alarm

### What you need to know

Most fatal fires occur at night when people are asleep. A working smoke alarm will detect smoke and sound to alert you.



There are two types of home smoke alarms available: ionization and photoelectric. The ionization detector reacts more quickly to flaming fires, whereas the photoelectric type provides faster detection of smouldering fires and is less likely to be affected by normal cooking. Both types provide good protection.

Smoke alarms can be electrically connected to a home's electrical wiring, be battery-operated or a combination of both. When purchasing a smoke alarm, look for a product that has been manufactured and tested to an acceptable standard and listed by a recognized laboratory, such as the Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (ULC), or Underwriters Laboratories Incorporated (cUL).





When installing, testing, and maintaining smoke alarms, make sure you follow the user's guide included with each smoke alarm.



### Install more than one

As a minimum, install a smoke alarm on every level of your home and near each sleeping area. For additional protection install smoke alarms in every bedroom. Remember to replace alarms that are more than 10 years old. Smoke alarms don't last forever.

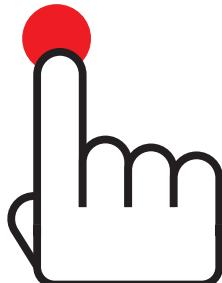


### Where to install smoke alarms

Because smoke rises, it is recommended that you place the alarms on the ceiling. Avoid ceilings near bathrooms, heating appliances, windows and ceiling fans. Follow the user's guide.

### Test your alarm

Test your smoke alarms monthly by pressing the test button.



### Replace batteries regularly

Install a new battery in each alarm once a year. When warning beeps sound, replace your battery immediately. Never wait. As a good practice, you can choose to change your batteries when you change your clocks in the Spring and Fall.

### Maintain alarms

Prevent dust from clogging your smoke alarms by gently vacuuming them with a soft brush every six months. Never vacuum electrically connected alarms unless you shut the power off. Test each unit when finished.

### Prepare and practice

Draw a floor plan showing how you and your family would escape a fire in your home. Look for two ways out of each room and have a pre-arranged meeting place outside. Regularly practice with every occupant of your home. After everyone is outside, call 911 from a safe location.



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## Carbon Monoxide

### Dangers of Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO), often called “the silent killer,” is an invisible, odourless, colourless gas produced when burning fossil fuels; such as kerosene, gasoline, wood, natural gas, propane, and oil. Carbon monoxide can be produced by any fuel-burning appliance that is malfunctioning, improperly installed or not ventilated correctly. Possible sources of CO could be faulty furnaces or other heating appliances, portable generators, water heaters, clothes dryers, charcoal/gas grill in an enclosed area, or vehicles and other combustion engines running in an open or closed garage, attached or near a home.



Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning may include headache, nausea, and drowsiness. Extremely high levels of poisoning can be fatal, causing death within minutes.

If you have any appliances or engines using fossils fuels in your home, you should install a certified CO alarm from an approved and recognized standard entity such as CSA.



### If Your CO Alarm Sounds

Immediately move to a fresh air location (outdoors or by an open window or door). Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for. Call 911 or the fire department from a fresh air location and remain there until emergency personnel arrives to assist you.

## Two Ways Out!

Knowing two ways out of every room of your home, having an escape plan and practicing it often are fundamental actions for survival during a home fire. Remember when there is a fire in your home, the first thing to do is to get out and stay out.

Running back in for forgotten articles or pets is what kills people. Find a safe place outside and stay there until the fire department arrives on scene and make sure you have accounted for everyone that was there with you. Let the responding fire department know all is accounted for.

Key to your family's safety is planning and practicing a home fire escape plan at least twice a year. If possible, identify two escape routes out of each room, then make sure that each of these can be used safely by everyone during an emergency.



Items that block doors and windows in your home could keep you from escaping in the event of a home fire. This could mean the difference between life and death. So unblock your exits today!

When arranging furniture and other items, make sure that you're not blocking doors or windows with televisions, heavy dressers, tables, couches, or even potted plants. Every room needs two ways out. Remove furniture that may be blocking doors or windows.

Christmas trees and other holiday decorations can light up a room – but don't let them block your escape route.

Never nail or paint windows shut. Opening them could be crucial in the event of a home fire. Inspect your windows and doors. Remove nails or paint that could prevent using windows for escape. In Canada, many residents often cover their windows with plastic during the long winter. Make sure everyone in your family can easily remove the plastic in case of an emergency.



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## Fire Extinguishers

The use of a fire extinguisher by a trained adult can be a life and property saving tool. However, the majority of adults have not received fire extinguisher training and may not know how and when to use them. The decision to use a fire extinguisher requires sound judgment and proper training.

### Should I Use a Fire Extinguisher?

Consider the following three questions before purchasing or using a fire extinguisher.

1

#### What type of fire extinguisher is needed?

Different types of fires require different types of extinguishers. For example, a grease fire and an electrical fire require the use of different extinguishing agents to be effective and safely put the fire out.



Basically, there are five different types of fire extinguishers. Most fire extinguishers display symbols to show the kind of fire on which they are to be used.

## Types of Fire Extinguishers



**Class A** extinguishers put out fires in ordinary combustible materials such as cloth, wood, paper.



**Class B** extinguishers are used on fires involving flammable liquids such as grease, gasoline, and oil-based paints.



**Class C** extinguishers are suitable for use on fires involving appliances, tools, or other electrically energized or plugged in appliances.



**Class D** extinguishers are designed for use on combustible metals and are often specific for the type of metal in question. These are typically found in factories working with these metals.



**Class K** fire extinguishers are intended for use on fires that involve vegetable oils, animal oils, or fats in cooking appliances. These extinguishers are generally found in commercial kitchens, such as those found in restaurants, cafeterias, and catering facilities. Class K extinguishers are now finding their way into the residential market for use in kitchens.

2

### Is the fire at a point where it might still be controlled by a fire extinguisher?

Portable fire extinguishers are valuable for immediate use on small fires. They contain a limited amount of extinguishing agent and need to be properly used so that this agent is not wasted. For example, when a pan initially catches fire, it may be safe to turn off the burner, place a lid on the pan, and use an extinguisher. However, if fire has spread out beyond the pan, these actions would not be adequate.

Only trained firefighters can safely extinguish such fire.

Use a fire extinguisher only if:

- You have alerted other occupants and someone has called the fire department;
- The fire is small and contained to a single object, such as a wastebasket;
- You are safe from the toxic smoke produced by the fire;
- You have a means of escape identified and the fire is not between you and the escape route; and
- Your instincts tell you that it is safe to use an extinguisher.

If *all* of these conditions are not present, you should NOT attempt to use a fire extinguisher. Alert other occupants, leave the building following your home escape plan, go to the agreed upon meeting place, and call the fire department from a cell phone or a neighbour's home.

3

### Am I physically capable of using the extinguisher?

Some people have physical limitations that might diminish or prevent them from properly using a fire extinguisher. People with

disabilities, older adults, or children may find that an extinguisher is too heavy to handle or it may be too difficult for them to exert the necessary pressure to operate the extinguisher.

### Maintenance

Fire extinguishers need to be regularly checked and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.





## Home Fire Sprinklers

### General Tips

Residential sprinkler systems keep fires small by reacting quickly to an unusual accumulation of heat; they dramatically reduce the heat and flames of a fire, and knock down smoke, allowing sufficient time for people to safely escape.

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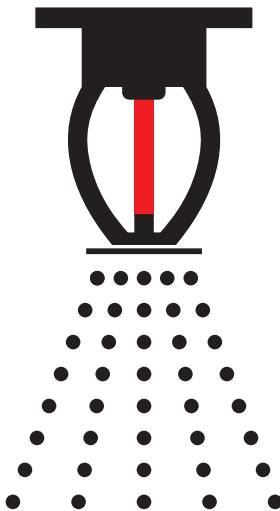
Residential sprinklers activate individually. Only the sprinklers closest to the fire will activate, spraying water directly onto the fire. Sprinklers will not activate in the rest of the house as seen in Hollywood movies.

A residential sprinkler system controls or extinguishes a fire with a tiny fraction of the water that would be used by fire department hoses.

Always remember to never paint, hang clothes from them or obstruct the sprinklers.

If your home is equipped with a residential sprinkler system, consult with your local fire prevention section to learn more.

If the residential sprinkler system activates, leave your home immediately and call 911.



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## Matches and Lighters

Keep matches and lighters up high out of the reach of children, preferably in a locked cabinet.

Purchase and use only child-resistant lighters. Lighters that look like toys can confuse children.

Do not buy or use them. Teach young children to tell a grownup if they find matches or lighters.



07

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## Candle Safety

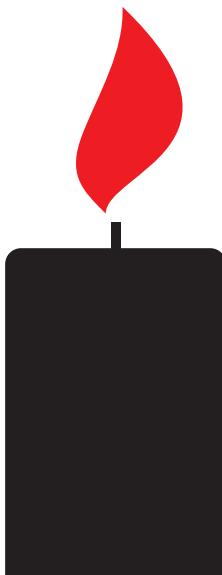
Fires caused by candles are on the rise. Every year, an increasing number of people are killed or injured because of careless use. By following the following guidelines, you can reduce the risk of fire:

### Using candles safely in your home

Keep these safety tips in mind whenever you use candles at home:

- put them on a heat-resistant surface – and be especially careful with tea lights, which get hot enough to melt plastic; TVs are not fire-resistant objects

- make sure they are held firmly upright by the holder so they won't fall over; the holder needs to be stable too, so it won't fall over either
- don't put candles near curtains, or other fabrics or furniture – and keep them out of draughts
- don't put them under shelves – make sure there's at least one metre (three feet) between a candle and any surface above it
- keep clothes and hair away from the naked flame – if there's any chance you could forget a candle, lean across it or brush past it, put it somewhere else
- candles should always be sited out of the reach of children and away from areas that pets can get into
- leave at least 10 cms (four inches) between any two candles
- extinguish candles before moving them and don't let anything fall into the hot wax, like matchsticks
- don't leave them burning – you should extinguish candles before you leave a room; never go to sleep with a candle still burning and never leave a burning candle or oil burner in a child's bedroom
- use a snuffer or a spoon to put them out – blowing them can send sparks and hot wax flying – and double-check that they're completely out and not still smouldering





## Kitchen Fires

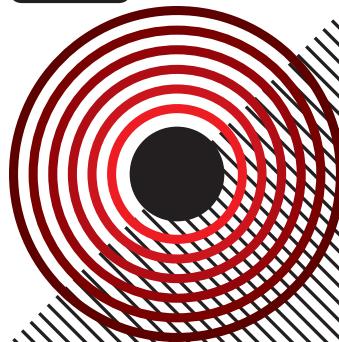
### Too hot to handle: Putting a lid on kitchen fires

More fires begin in the kitchen than any other room in the home. In fact, residential cooking is one of the leading causes of fire-related deaths. The majority of kitchen fires begin with cooking equipment. Number one on the list of fire sources are stoves, including microwave ovens.

#### Be constantly alert to cooking habits

- Keep pot handles turned toward the back of the stove: a small child could pull on a handle extending out at the front of a stove and be burned or scalded by the pot's contents. Avoid loose clothing while cooking: loose clothing can brush heating elements and easily catch fire.

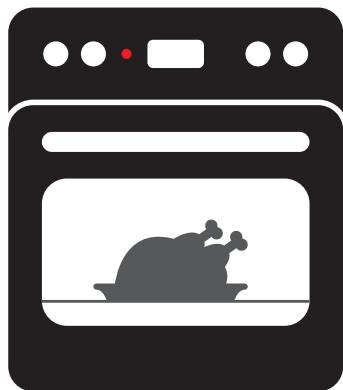
- Never leave food cooking unattended on the stove.
- Never store frequently used items above the stove where you may be burned reaching over the hot stove to get them.
- Remove pans of cooking fat or oils from the stove when not in use – it's easy to accidentally turn on the wrong burner.



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### To help prevent kitchen fires

- Keep stove and oven clean because built-up grease and food particles are easily ignited. Keep combustibles (i.e. curtains, dish towels, plastic or wood utensils, newspapers, grocery bags) away from the stove, oven and all appliances.
- Unplug kettles, frying pans and other appliances when not in use.

### In case of a grease or pan fire

- Turn off the stove. Smother flames with a pot lid or larger pan, if possible. Protect your hand with an oven mitt or wrapped dish towel.
- Use of an approved portable fire extinguisher only if you are familiar and trained with its safe operation.
- Never throw water or use flour on a grease fire.
- In case of an oven fire, close the oven door and turn off the oven. Never touch or attempt to carry a flaming pot. The contents may spill, spread or burn you.
- If the fire is not brought under control immediately, get yourself and your family out and call 911.

### What if I accidentally make contact with a flame or hot surface?

- If your clothing catches fire: stop where you are, drop to the ground, and roll back and forth to put the fire out.
- Immediately cool a burn with cool running water under a tap for five to ten minutes and then seek medical attention.



### How safe is my microwave oven?

Microwave ovens are safe appliances if used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. In case of fire, unplug the appliance if possible and do not open the microwave door until the flames are out.

### What other steps can I take to prevent kitchen fires?

- Make stove controls easy to read from a distance – perhaps mark "off" with a bright red dot.
- Examine the stove and oven, toasters, coffee makers, and other cooking devices for signs of cracking, fraying or wear on cords and plugs.
- Look for signs of overheating.
- Check for recognized testing laboratory labels to show that the unit has been well designed.
- Keep matches out of reach of children. Explain the dangers to your children.



## Turkey Fryers

The use of outdoor gas-fuel turkey fryers that immerse the turkey in hot oil is strongly discouraged. These turkey fryers use a substantial quantity of cooking oil at high temperatures and units currently available for home use pose a significant danger that hot oil will be released at some point during the cooking process. The use of turkey fryers by consumers can lead to devastating burns or other injuries and the destruction of property. However, if you are planning on using a turkey fryer, always read the manufacturers instructions before cooking with the unit.

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# Portable Heaters

Every year many people are injured or killed because of the improper use of portable heaters.

When using a space heater in your home, be sure to **follow all safety precautions** to prevent fires and scorching.



## Precautions for using portable electric heaters safely:

- Always use a heater with a ground fault interrupter.
- Use only extension cord bearing the label of a nationally recognized testing laboratory.
- Make sure the heater is always properly plugged in and the plug is fully inserted into the receptacle. An improperly plugged heater can cause an overheating condition.
- Always select a portable heater with a "Tip Over" Shut off feature that will allow the heater to turn off if tipped over.

- Broken heaters should be checked and repaired by a qualified appliance service center. Do not attempt to adjust or replace parts in the heater yourself.
- Always locate heaters at least three feet away from flammable objects such as bedding, furniture, curtains and drapes.
- Don't place heaters where towels or other flammable objects could fall onto them and start a fire.
- Never use heaters to dry clothes or shoes.
- Place heaters on the floor, never on tables or furniture, since they may fall, dislodging or breaking parts of the heater.
- String out electric cords on top of carpets or rugs; placing cords underneath anything can cause overheating.

Additionally, to prevent electrocutions, always keep portable electric heaters away from water; never use them in a bathroom or near a sink.



Look for one that is listed with a nationally-recognized testing laboratory. These heaters have been tested to meet specific safety standards, and manufacturers are required to provide important use and care information to the consumer.

Even though electric space heaters do not have an open flame, some types of electrical heaters will become hot enough to ignite nearby combustibles. It is therefore important to periodically check surrounding objects to make sure nothing is exposed to the heat.





# Evacuation Plan

Fire Department Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

For help you can contact your local fire department.

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