



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 43 – October 2020

10 Tips for Fire Prevention

Introduction

October is fire prevention month. The U.S. Fire Administration reports that fires kill more than 4,000 Americans each year and injure approximately 20,000 more. U.S. fire departments respond to nearly 2 million fires each year, with three-quarters of them occurring in personal residences. This week we will focus on 10 basic safety tips for preventing fires in your home and reducing the risk of injury should one occur.

Monday – Tips 1-3

1. **Smoke Alarms** – These are still a very important addition to your home. Smoke alarms are widely available and inexpensive. Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home and test it monthly.
2. **Prevent Electrical Fires** – Don't overload circuits or extension cords. Cords and wires should never be placed under rugs or in high traffic areas. Avoid loose electrical connections by checking the fit of the plug in the wall outlet. If the plug loosely fits, inspect the outlet right away. A poor connection between the plug and the outlet can cause overheating and can start a fire in minutes.
3. **Keep Plugs Safe** – Unplug all appliances when not in use. Follow the manufacturer's safety precautions and use your senses to spot any potential disasters. If a plug is overheating, smells strange, shorts out or sparks – the appliance should be shut off immediately, then replaced or repaired.

Tuesday – Tips 4-6

4. **Alternate Heaters** – Make sure there is ample space around any portable heating unit. Anything that could catch fire should be at least three feet away. Inspect your chimney annually and use fire screens to help keep fires, ash, embers, and burning wood in the fireplace.
5. **Fire Safety Sprinklers** – When combined with working smoke alarms, home fire sprinklers greatly increase your chance of surviving a fire. Sprinklers are affordable and they can increase property value and even lower insurance rates.
6. **Create an Escape Route** – Create and practice your escape plan with your family from every room in the house. Practice staying low to the floor and checking for hot doors using the back of your hand. It's just like a routine school fire drill – but in your home.

Wednesday – Tips 7-8

7. **Position Appliances Carefully** – Try to keep TV sets, kitchen appliances, and all other appliances away from windows with curtains. If there is a wiring problem, curtains can spread a fire quickly. Additionally, keeping your appliances away from water sources (like rain coming in from windows) can help prevent wiring damage which can also lead to a fire.
8. **Clean Dryer Vents** – Clothes dryers often start fires in residential areas. Clean the lint filter every time you start a load of clothes to dry or after the drying cycle is complete. Make sure your exhaust duct is made of metal tubing and not plastic or foil. Clean the exhaust duct with a good quality dryer vent brush to prevent blockage & check for lint build up behind the dryer at least twice a year.

Thursday – Tips 9-10

9. **Be Careful Around the Holidays** – If you fill your home with lights during the holiday season, keep them away from anything that can easily catch fire. Check all your lights prior to stringing them up and dispose of anything with frayed or exposed wires.
10. **Conduct Regular Inspections** – Check all your electronic equipment and wiring at least once a month. Taking a little time to do this each month can really pay off.



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Friday – Open Discussion

Now that we've covered some basic fire prevention tips, let's open it up to the group for discussion.

- Does the group have any other tips not listed this week?
- Have you ever had a fire in your home?
- What happened during the fire? Did you learn any lessons from the experience that you can share?
- Did you find these tips helpful? Will you use any in the future?