

# Home Fire Hazards

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Fires and accidents are likely to happen anywhere and at anytime including in the kitchen, living room, bedroom, garage, storage area (attic, basement, workroom, and closet) as well as during the day or at night.

Causes of fires include overloaded/overheated electrical cords, cigarette ashes, smoldering (cigarette) ashes in couches, beds and chairs. Sparks from a fireplace or unattended outdoor fire can lead to extreme fires. Appliances that are in poor repair or condition and unattended cooking in the kitchen or on the grill also account for many fires as well.

Another area of concern in basic life safety. Not only for children but also adults. Children and adults get hurt unintentionally all the time by carelessness and as a result of unsafe actions--usually because we don't want to take the extra couple seconds to make or do something 'right'.

One of the best ways to prevent fire and accidents in the home is to do an inspection that includes looking for ways to make your home and property safe from accidents and fire hazards. You should also include in this inspection emergency measures incase of a fire like setting up an EDITH plan or emergency contact plan incase of serious injury that would require a child or other person to summons help for you. We've included some hazards to watch for in you home:

## *KITCHEN:*

- ✦ All electrical appliances and tools should have a label on them from an approved testing agency. If the appliances are not working correctly or if it gets wet, have it serviced as soon as possible to help minimize the chance of using it again.
- ✦ Check cords on appliances. If they are worn out, frayed, torn or cut, have them repaired.
- ✦ Don't overload receptacles.
- ✦ Be sure when using appliances on the counter that the cord is fully on the counter and out of the way of children who could pull them down on themselves.
- ✦ Storing items above the stove is not a good idea. Many people have been burned by reaching above the stove or items resulting in a pot or pan being bumped and the contents spilling and burning themselves and/or others around them.
- ✦ Turn pot handles so children can't pull them down (face the center of the stove)
- ✦ Keep chemicals locked up if they are stored in the kitchen. Make sure they have the proper label on them. Chemicals should be stored out of reach of children and they should also be stored separately from food. Store flammable liquids in a shed.
- ✦ Wear tight sleeves when cooking so you don't snag the handles on pots and pans and also so that the sleeves don't come in contact with the burners.
- ✦ Be sure to clean the oven and stove surfaces after each use to prevent a build up of grease and dirt.
- ✦ Be sure to have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen

- ✦ Be sure that 'Pizza Ovens' and microwaves have room to 'breathe' around them as set forth in the owners manual or users guide.

### *LIVING ROOM OR FAMILY ROOM*

- ✦ Be sure portable space heaters are at least 3 feet away from anything that can catch fire including walls and curtains.
- ✦ Use a metal or glass fireplace screen. Have the chimney checked and cleaned regularly.
- ✦ Put lighters and matches where small children won't find them.
- ✦ Ashtrays should be emptied often but only when all signs of heat and burning are gone.
- ✦ Allow plenty of space around the TV and stereo to prevent overheating. If these appliances are not working correctly, get them fixed. Unplug them if they are not working correctly.
- ✦ If extension cords must be used, do not over load them. Check to be sure they are not frayed or worn. Also, do not place cords under rugs or carpeting and never loop them over a nail or other sharp object.
- ✦ Receptacles should be covered with a child-proof fitting.
- ✦ Only use light bulbs at or below the wattage specified by the manufacturer for the given lamp or light fixture.
- ✦ Never place materials such as clothing and towels on top of a halogen torchiere lamp
- ✦ Although halogen bulbs use less energy than regular incandescent bulbs, they burn much hotter--be careful not to get burnt!
- ✦ Never place a halogen torchiere lamp near an open window or where a strong breeze could blow drapery onto the lamp bulb
- ✦ Never use halogen torchiere lamps in children's bedrooms or playrooms.
- ✦ Don't use a bulb higher than that recommended by the manufacturer or 300 watts (which ever is less) in your halogen torchiere lamp
- ✦ Avoid leaving high-wattage (more than 100 watts) halogen lamps on when you leave the room or when you are not at home.
- ✦ Never touch a halogen bulb with bare fingers! Even if the bulb has been turned off for several hours, they can still burn you. As well, the oils on your fingers can damage the bulb.

### *BATHROOM*

- ✦ Check for overloaded extension cords and receptacles.
- ✦ Do not use phones while in the tub or shower.
- ✦ Don't place appliances (hair dryers, curlers, etc.) near water.
- ✦ Make sure all medications and cosmetics are kept out of reach of small children. Safety locks should be installed on all drawers and cabinets.
- ✦ Dump old or outdated medicine down the toilet.
- ✦ Check bathtub/shower, rugs and mats for slipping hazards.
- ✦ Check the water for possible burn hazard.

*Town of Menasha Fire Department  
Public Education: Our first line of defense*

## BEDROOMS

- ✚ Check smoke detectors regularly to ensure proper operation.
- ✚ Keep a working flashlight next to each bed in case of power outage
- ✚ Check for overloaded receptacles and extension cords
- ✚ Check clearance of combustibles near heaters
- ✚ Each family member should know what to do in case of a fire. EDITH is the perfect idea here!
- ✚ Plan two escapes from each bedroom in case of fire.
- ✚ If you smoke, do NOT smoke in bed.
- ✚ Use a tape measure or ruler and look for strangulation hazards and areas where an infant can become trapped. There should be no more than 2 and 3/8 inches between crib slats, corner posts should not extend more than 1/16 of an inch above the end panels (unless the corner posts extend at least 16 inches high for a canopy), and headboards and footboards should not contain cutout areas.

## BASEMENT, STORAGE AND GARAGE

- ✚ Store gasoline and other flammables in tight metal containers. Don't use flammable liquids near heat, a pilot light or while smoking
- ✚ Clean up workbench or other work area frequently
- ✚ If a fuse blows or circuit breaker trips, find the problem. Don't just reset it as it may short something out. Be sure to replace a fuse with one the correct size
- ✚ Don't store things near the furnace or heater
- ✚ Get rid of stored newspaper and other rubbish. *Newspapers stored in a damp, warm place may ignite spontaneously!*
- ✚ Oily, greasy rags should be kept in *labeled* and sealed non-glass containers (preferably metal).
- ✚ Keep all chemicals, paints, etc. in their original containers
- ✚ Set your water heater at 120 degrees Fahrenheit to help prevent scalding.

## OUTDOORS

- ✚ Move the lawnmower away from gasoline fumes before starting.
- ✚ Allow the engine to cool before refueling.
- ✚ Don't store more of anything than is needed (oil, antifreeze, gasoline, paint, etc).
- ✚ Don't ever use gasoline on a grill or fire pit. Once the fire has been started, never use lighter fluid or gasoline. Only use dry kindling to revive the fire.