

These safety tips can help maintain a safe home.

- Insure fireplaces and stoves are properly installed. Wood stoves should have at least 36 inches of clearance space from combustible surfaces.
- Wood stoves should be UL listed with good quality, solid construction and design. Floor supports and protection should be constructed of proper materials.
- Chimneys should have annual professional inspections. If necessary, conduct a thorough cleaning of the entire chimney system.
- Do not use flammable liquids to start or accelerate a fire in a fireplace or wood stove.
- Keep a sturdy glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace opening to prevent embers or sparks from escaping. This will also prevent unwanted material from entering the fireplace to help prevent the possibility of burns to occupants.
- Never discard hot ashes inside or near the home. Place the ashes in a metal container outside away from the house.
- Never use a range or an oven as a supplemental heating device. It is a safety hazard and can be a source of potentially toxic fumes.
- Do not overload the circuits. Use extension cords that are rated for the amp load. When selecting an extension cord, choose one that is the same size, or larger, than the appliance electrical cord. Check all electrical appliances, cords, and outlets. Be careful about do-it-yourself electrical projects, studies have shown that home fires are caused by improper installation of electrical devices.
- The most important fire safety tip is to make certain every level of your home has a clean and working smoke alarm. This should be done on a monthly basis.
- Be vigilant about portable heaters. Do not leave running while unattended. Check for frayed or damaged cords.
- Practice safety in the kitchen. Keep cords out of children's reach. Do not overload outlets.
- Beware of cigarettes; do not leave burning while unattended.
- Never allow children to play with matches and lighters.
- Use candles safely; do not place open flames near flammable objects.
- Keep fire extinguishers in easy-to-reach places.
- Teach children the facts about fire safety and practice fire drills at home. Plan an escape route and have a destination point for everybody to meet such as at a neighbor's house across the street. Unfortunately, many children will try to hide from a fire, often in a closet, under a bed, or in a corner. By teaching them basic fire facts, they will be better prepared to protect themselves.
- Teach your children how fires can spread quickly. Remind them to always stay low to the ground and check doors for heat before opening. Most fire-related deaths are not from burns but from smoke inhalation, dangerous fumes can overcome a person in just a few minutes.