

Fire Prevention Week 2018 (October 7 – 13) -- Look. Listen. Learn. (continued)

COOKING

- Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries. The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, boiling, grilling, or broiling food.
- If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly and stay in the home.
- Keep anything that could catch fire away from your stovetop.

HEATING

- Heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fires during the winter months.
- Space heaters are the type of equipment most often involved in home heating equipment fires.
- All heaters need space. Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Have a 3-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Purchase and use only portable space heaters listed by a qualified testing laboratory.
- Have a qualified professional install your heating equipment.
- Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional.

HAVE WORKING SMOKE ALARMS!

- Most fatal home fires begin in one room and then kill people elsewhere in the house. This occurs after the fire has reached extremely high temperatures in the room where it began and then smoke and toxic gases migrate to other areas. These fires are readily detected by all common types of smoke detectors in time for sleeping occupants to awaken and safely escape.
- Smoke alarms are not created equally. Hard-wired smoke alarms will not work during a power outage, unless they are equipped with a battery back-up and many are not so equipped. Homeowners are strongly urged to install battery operated smoke alarms in order to provide maximum protection when power is interrupted, a common occurrence during thunderstorms and heavy snow storms.
- Smoke alarms must be properly located, installed and maintained in order to be effective. To afford adequate protection, smoke alarms must be: (1) located on each level of the dwelling unit, including basements; (2) located in all sleeping rooms and outside of each separate sleeping area, in the immediate vicinity of the sleeping rooms; (3) installed properly and in working condition; and (4) tested at least once a month by pushing the "test button." Smoke alarm batteries should be routinely replaced twice a year.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows the sound of your smoke alarms and knows how to respond.
- Smoke alarms are an important first line of defense against fire. But if they don't work, they can't protect you. It is essential for every household to have working smoke alarms. Data indicates that 40 percent of home fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms and another 23 percent happen in homes with smoke alarms that don't work. When smoke alarms fail to sound (beep), it's usually because they have missing, dead, or disconnected batteries. This is why you need a home fire escape plan and working smoke alarms!

MAKE A HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN!

- A home fire escape plan is a plan to get out of your home quickly.
- Get everyone in your home together. Find all doors and windows that lead directly outside. Make sure they open easily. Windows or doors with security bars or window guards should have emergency release devices so they can be used for escape.
- Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible. One way out will be the door and the second way out may be a window or another door.
- Have a plan for anyone in your home who may need assistance to escape, such as young children, older adults, or people with disabilities.
- Choose an outside meeting place a safe distance in front of your home where everyone should meet once they have escaped.

PRACTICE **EXIT DRILLS IN THE HOME (E.D.I.T.H.)!**

- At least twice a year practice exit drills and your fire escape plan at night and during the day with everyone living in your home.
- Push a smoke alarm test button to start the drill.
- Get out fast and close doors behind you as you leave.
- Go to your outside meeting place.
- Practice E.D.I.T.H. using different ways out of your home.
- Make sure everyone knows how to call 911 or the emergency phone number for your local fire department.
- Make sure your house number can be seen from the street both during the day and at night.

If you have any questions regarding home fire safety, please contact the Division of the Fire Marshal, Office of Research Services at 301-496-0487.