

Fire Safety Tips

Presented by...CRYSTAL Restoration Services

Basic Fire Prevention

The key to surviving a fire is preventing one in the first place. Following are some helpful tips on basic fire prevention:

- Keep your home free of oily rags and trash build-up. Gasoline and other flammable liquids should be stored in approved metal safety cans. (The legal limit for gasoline storage is five gallons.)
- Keep household trash in a covered can away from any heat source. Recycle newspapers frequently. Remove all weeds, tree branches and litter from your yard.
- Keep cleaning materials in a ventilated area and away from any heat source, such as a water heater. Vapors given off by these substances can ignite when they come

into contact with a heat source, such as a pilot light.

- Check lamps, appliance cords and light switches to make sure there is no faulty wiring. Never overload electrical circuits.
- Allow adequate ventilation space around televisions, stereos, and other entertainment equipment.
- Keep matches in a closed metal container away from heat sources and out of reach of children.
- If you have a fireplace, make sure it is properly screened. Install a spark arrester with at least a half-inch mesh in the chimney.
- Be a careful cook. Never wear long sleeves when cooking, as they can catch fire. Keep the handles of

your pots turned inward so the pots can't be knocked over. Never put foils or other metals in a microwave oven.

- Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen and by your outdoor grill.

- NEVER smoke in bed or while lying down on a couch or lounge chair! Carelessly discarded cigarettes are the leading cause of fire deaths in the United States.



Smoke Detectors

The importance of smoke detectors cannot be overstated. Most fires occur at night, while people are sleeping. The toxic gases from a fire can numb your senses and disorient you. For this reason, smoke detectors are a must in every household. In fact, your risk of dying in a home fire is cut in half! You can protect yourself and your family with a few simple steps:

- Install a smoke detector in every bedroom and keep one centrally located on each floor of your home.

Hallways and kitchens are especially good places.

- Mount smoke detectors either on the ceiling or high on a wall, about 6-12 inches from the ceiling (smoke rises).
- Do NOT install smoke detectors by doors, windows or vents, where drafts could affect their performance.
- Test and clean your smoke detectors' batteries about once a month.

Most experts suggest replacing the batteries in the spring and fall when the time changes.

- Do NOT paint your smoke detector unit, as you might clog its smoke detecting sensors. Gently vacuum it and keep it free of dust and other foreign particles that could hinder its abilities.

Fire Emergency Plan

When a fire strikes, everything happens very fast. That is why you should make a family fire emergency plan NOW, before you need it.

- Make sure all family members know how to dial 911 in case of emergency.
- Have at least two exits from every

room in your home. Invest in fire escape ladders for upper level bedrooms.

- Go through a practice drill every six months. Make sure the whole family takes part in the drill.
- Arrange a central meeting place at a tree or other landmark in front of

your house. Train family members to go straight to the meeting place after they escape from the house.

- Teach children NEVER to go back into the house after they escape, even for a favorite toy or pet. Train them NOT to hide under beds or in closets.

If A Fire Does Occur

Unfortunately, you may one day find yourself in a situation where a fire is involved. The following tips could save your life:

- If a grease fire occurs while you are cooking, DO NOT throw water on it. Water splashes the grease and the flames. Shut off the heat source. Use a dry chemical fire extinguisher, cover the fire with the pan lid, or sprinkle baking soda over the flames.
- In case of an electric fire, switch off the main circuits and put sand on the fire.
- Before opening a door, make sure there is NOT a fire on the other side by checking the closed door for heat. If everything feels cool, brace your shoulder against the door and open it carefully. Be ready to slam it shut if heat or smoke rushes in.
- Close all doors behind you as you go from room to room. This can slow the spread of fire and smoke.
- If you encounter smoke, use an alternative escape route. If you must exit through smoke, the cleanest air will be several inches off the floor. Crawl on your hands and knees to the nearest safe exit. Cover your mouth with a cloth, if possible, to avoid inhaling smoke and gases.
- Once you are outside, do NOT go back into the house. Go to your family's central meeting place, then have someone use a neighbor's phone to call the fire department.
- If you are trapped, close doors between you and the fire. Stuff the cracks around doors and cover vents to keep smoke out. Wait at a window and signal for help with a flashlight, if you have one, or by waving a piece of light-colored cloth. If there is a phone in the room where you're trapped, call the fire department and tell them ex-

actly where you are.

- Everyone in your family should know the "Stop, Drop and Roll" rule. If your clothes catch fire, DON'T RUN! Stop where you are, drop to the ground, cover your face with your hands to protect your face and lungs, and roll over and over to smother the flames.
- If you see someone on fire, quickly cover them with a blanket, coat, or any heavy piece of cloth to smother the flames. If you don't have anything to cover them with, throw them to the ground and try to encourage them to roll over.



After A Fire

After any fire, you should use caution when re-entering or cleaning your home. Consult



your fire department as well as repairmen and other specialists in home restoration.

Unfortunately, you may accidentally cause even more damage to your possessions or your home if you re-enter and try cleaning without knowing the special needs and dangers involved. The fire, smoke and water damage that are a result of a fire pose certain problems that are not usually encountered by the average homeowner. The following is a list of

suggestions should you find yourself in a fire damage situation:

- Immediately contact your insurance agent.
- Be especially careful of electricity, particularly when there is water damage. Water is an outstanding conductor of electricity, and is too great to ignore.
- Be careful using electric appliances and outlets; you don't want to risk electrocution by using damaged equipment. This also applies to electric lights.
- Limit movement within your home so weakened household goods and furniture are not further damaged.
- Don't wash walls and carpets without first consulting a professional.

Improper cleaning methods could result in even more damage.

- Call a professional restoration company. Professional restorers specialize in cleaning and repairing homes after water damage, sewage backflows, fire damage, and "puffbacks" from a furnace, as well as assisting with mold and odors.



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