

## TAKE A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Start by making a commitment to being aware of your surroundings and setting a good example. This will help you and others change unsafe behaviors you may not even be know you have. Go through this checklist often with the whole family.

### In the Kitchen

-  Clean stovetop and counters, keep them free of grease and clutter.
-  Place potholders and other combustibles 3 feet from stove.
-  Maintain a fire extinguisher near the exit.
-  Have childproof locks on all cabinets.
-  Unplug all small appliances when not in use and keep cords up and out of reach of children.

### In the maintenance room

-  Change your furnace filter regularly and have the heating system cleaned and inspected by an industry professional annually.
-  Clean around and under the laundry equipment often, and empty the dryer lint screen with each load.

-  Store household cleaners on a shelf away from heat sources, pets, and children.

### Around the home

Parents have the primary responsibility to ensure a safe environment and teach safe behaviors. But everyone in the home needs to take a personal responsibility.

-  Outlets must have no more than one cord unless it is equipped with a UL listed power strip. Place childproof plugs in unused outlets.
  -  Replace all cracked, frayed or damaged cords. Never run cords under rugs or carpets.
  -  Use ground Fault Circuit Interrupters in bathroom and kitchen outlets.
  -  Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from combustibles.
  -  Burn only dry, seasoned wood in your fireplace and always close the protective screen.
  -  Store matches and lighters up and out of reach of children.
- Provide large deep ashtrays if you allow smoking in our home.
-  Garbage cans should be have lids and all smoking materials must be cool prior to disposal.
  -  Candle bases must be large enough not to tip and non combustible.
  -  Candles must be a safe distance from combustibles and never left unattended.

-  Store all flammable liquids outdoors in a cool place up and out of reach of children.

### Preparing your home

-  Install smoke alarms on each level of your home, and inside or near sleeping areas following the manufacturer's directions.
-  Replace any smoke alarm that you suspect may be 10 years old or more.
-  Test your smoke alarm monthly and replace the batteries at least once a year.
-  Install and maintain a carbon monoxide alarm in accordance with manufacturer's directions.
-  Place fire extinguishers on each level of you home and in the garage, mounted near the exit.
-  Plan and practice a home escape plan including two ways out of each room and a meeting place away from the home. Get out and stay out!
-  Teach family members to stop, drop, and roll if their clothing catches fire, and to crawl low under smoke.

### Consider installing a sprinkler system.

Residential fire sprinkler systems can control or extinguish your fire very quickly saving lives and property. The National Fire Protection Association states that 90 percent of home fires can be contained by the operation of just one sprinkler head.



### **THE FACTS ON FIRES**

In our nation, an estimated 2,850 people die and 15,900 people are injured annually because of fires in residences. These fires result in property losses of about \$3.8 billion annually.

In Minnesota there were 4,858 residential structure fires in 2003, which was a 30% increase over 2002 figures. Residential fires accounted for 60% of total dollar loss and represented 70 % of all structure fires.

A fire was reported every 26 minutes, resulting in \$422,928 for a annual total of \$154,368,807 in property loss.

These fires also harm people. In 2003 there were 160 civilians suffered injuries, and 317 firefighters were injured. And unfortunately 46 civilian deaths were recorded and one firefighter died in the line of duty.

By taking a personal responsibility to eliminate the hazards in our homes we can reduce these tragic statistics.



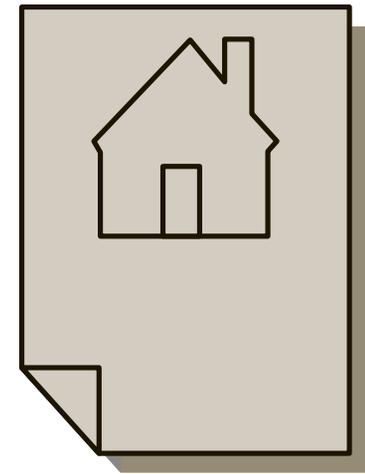
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