

**Fire Safety**



**Hunt for  
Home  
Hazards**



**Alberta**

MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS  
Fire Commissioner's Office



The delicious aroma of a fresh-baked pie, a cozy fire in the fireplace, snuggling on the couch to watch T.V., children playing in their rooms. These

are the images we have of home; a comfortable and secure place. But unfortunately, many of these activities, in moments of carelessness or forgetfulness, can invite the danger of fire.

Fire statistics for North America, including Alberta, show that most fire injuries and deaths occur in homes. But we can lower these statistics by following fire safe habits, knowing about potential hazards and constantly being aware of fire danger. Make hunting for home hazards a regular part of your daily activities.



## Kitchen

In Alberta homes, kitchens are where most fires start.

Establish a “safety area” in the kitchen to keep small children confined and away from hot surfaces, hot liquids or flames.

Always attend to pots and pans heating on the stove. If you need to leave the kitchen while cooking, turn off the heat. A distraction can be an invitation to a disaster.

To keep hot cookware away from a child’s reach, use the back burners and turn pot handles in.

Avoid storing things above the stove. People can get burned when reaching over a hot stove.

Wear short or tight-fitting sleeves when cooking. Loose sleeves could catch fire easily.

## Appliances

Avoid overloading an electrical outlet, and avoid having two heating appliances (e.g. toaster, iron) on the same outlet at the same time.



Unplug small appliances (e.g. toasters, can openers, blenders) after use.



When unplugging appliances, always grasp the plug and pull it firmly.

Keep paper, cardboard boxes, grocery bags, etc. away from stove elements.

Make sure that the oven, burners and exhaust hood of your stove are free of grease.

Wait till appliances are cool before putting them away. Never wrap a cord around a warm appliance.

Develop a habit of checking that all stove burner controls are at the “off” position before proceeding to do other activities.

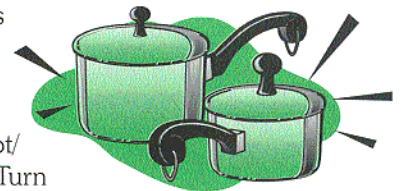
## Deep Frying

Most kitchen fires in Alberta start from deep fat frying.

The primary reason is overheated cooking oil.

When deep frying:

- use only a thermostatically controlled electric deep fat fryer.
- keep a tight-fitting lid nearby to cover the pot if oil ignites.
- if hot oil vapors catch fire, smother the flames by covering the pot/pan with a lid. Turn off the heat and the fan.



- do not throw water on a flaming pot. Do not carry the pot/pan or throw contents into the sink. Hot oil can reach temperatures over 200°C and contact with skin would cause deep burns instantly.



- keep a suitable portable fire extinguisher nearby, and know how to use it.

## Microwave Ovens

Fires or heat injuries can happen in microwave ovens too.

- take lids or coverings off carefully to avoid burns from steam.
- use oven mitts to remove dishes from the microwave.
- avoid using metal in the microwave (e.g. aluminium foil, staples in bags, twist ties). It may spark, become very hot, and ignite combustible items such as paper and plastic.
- check foods being heated for extended time periods.
- if a fire occurs, keep the oven door shut. Unplug the appliance.

## Living Room

Before you go to bed, always check upholstered furniture for fallen cigarette butts or smoldering ashes.



Use large, deep ashtrays.

Discourage people who are impaired by alcohol/ medication from smoking.

Wet ashtray contents before disposing them.

Put lighters and matches out of reach of small children. Teach children to give any matches/lighters they find to adults.

Allow air space around the T.V. and stereo to prevent overheating. If the T.V. doesn't work properly, it can be a fire danger. Have it serviced.

Keep portable space heaters at least one metre away from people and combustibles. Unplug heaters after use or when leaving the room.



With fuel burning space heaters:

- use the correct fuel (never gasoline).
- don't overfill.
- never fill while heater is hot or burning.
- provide adequate ventilation.

## Fireplace

Make sure that the area around the fireplace is free of combustible material (magazines, newspapers, etc.).

Burn only small loads of wood in the fireplace.

Follow instructions when using artificial logs.

Use a metal fireplace screen.

Never leave an open fire unattended and make sure that children are not left unattended when the fireplace is in use.

Be sure that the fire is out before going to bed or leaving the house.

Never close the damper completely before fire is out or while the ashes are still hot.

Empty ashes regularly; store them in covered metal containers outside.

Have the chimney checked and cleaned regularly at the beginning of every burning season.

Never burn green wood. It produces tar or creosote that builds up in the chimney.





## Bedroom

Install smoke alarms between sleeping areas and other parts of the house. Make sure they are in proper working order.

Plan two fire exits from each bedroom.

Ensure NO ONE smokes in bed.

Don't overload electrical outlets.

Keep combustible items such as bedding, pillows, paper, fluffy toys, etc., away from heat sources, such as electric light bulbs or space heaters.



## Basement, Garage and Storage

Store gasoline and other flammables outside your home. Never use flammable liquids near heat, any open flame such as a pilot light, or while smoking. Keep flammables away from sparks. (Flammable liquids include gasoline, paint thinners, acetone, paints, strippers and adhesives.)



Have your heating equipment checked yearly. If the pilot light on your gas furnace or water heater goes out, relight the appliance carefully following the manufacturer's instructions or have a qualified person relight it.

Keep the area around the furnace and hot water heater free from clutter.

If a fuse or breaker blows, find the cause. And always replace a fuse with one of the correct size.

Clean lint from the dryer before each load goes in.

Never leave a hot iron unattended.

Clean your work area of scraps, wood, sawdust. Don't let trash accumulate. Discard trash regularly.

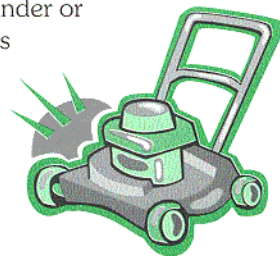
## Outdoors/Attic

Before starting your lawnmower, make sure it is clear of gasoline fumes.

When barbecuing, never use gasoline to start or rekindle the fire; use only barbecue starter to light a charcoal fire. Once the fire has started, use only dry kindling to revive the fire.

Keep barbecues away from buildings, fences and combustible items.

In the attic, store "treasures", clothes, etc., in boxes. Keep them away from chimneys and wiring. Don't store them under or on stairways or in hallways where they could feed a fire or block an escape route.



## Planning Your Escape

How you and your family respond during a fire emergency could mean the difference between life and death. Proper response to a fire emergency involves two things:

- 1) early detection of smoke and fire with smoke alarms, and
- 2) having planned and practiced a fire escape plan.

Smoke alarms provide early warning of fire danger, especially at night. Have at least one smoke alarm for each level of your home. Make sure the smoke alarms are in working order by testing them with smoke monthly, and cleaning them at least once a year. Replace batteries annually or as needed.



During a fire emergency, you and your family can respond properly if you have planned and practiced a fire escape plan beforehand.

## Plan:

- Draw a floor plan of your home.
- Plan two exits from each room.
- Plan a meeting place outside of the home so you know everyone escaped safely.
- Designate one person to go to a neighbor's house to call the fire department.

## Practice:

- Practice the above plan with your family. Practice crawling on the floor where the air will be cleaner in a smoke-filled room. Open doors cautiously. Close doors behind you to contain smoke and fire. In case an exit is blocked by smoke or fire, use an alternate exit.
- Never use an elevator in a fire emergency.
- Once outside the home, stay out (invisible toxic gases from fire can kill you).

By following these safety tips, you can make your home safe from fire hazards. And if a fire does occur, early warning from smoke alarms and following your fire escape plan will help you escape to safety.

For further information contact the  
Fire Commissioner's Office  
at 780-427-8392,

or

visit the Alberta Municipal Affairs website at  
<http://www.gov.ab.ca/ma>

