



Civil Air Patrol – USAF Auxiliary
La Crosse Composite Squadron
SAFETY NEWS



November 2016

Fall Fire Safety Tips

Fall is a great time to refresh our memory on fire and other safety tips. Here's my Top 8 -

1. Change Batteries in Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Detectors -

Make it a habit to change the batteries in your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors (CO) every fall and spring when changing the clocks for Daylight Savings Time.

2. Check Fire Extinguishers -

Check your household fire extinguishers to make sure that they are fully charged and in working order. Do this when you change the batteries in smoke and CO detectors.

3. Safe Home Heating Tips -

Regardless of the type of unit you use to heat your home, make sure it is in safe working order. Get your central heating system cleaned, inspected and serviced by a certified HVAC (heating, venting and air conditioning) contractor every year before using it.

If you have a gas heater, make sure that you have a sufficient number of fully functioning carbon monoxide detectors installed in your home.

4. Space Heater Safety Tips -

Make sure that any space heaters are surrounded by at least three feet of empty space. If you have young children, make sure they know that this area is a "kid-free" zone.

Don't use an extension cord or power strip with a space heater. These can easily overheat and result in a fire. Don't plug any other electrical devices into the same outlet as the heater.

Place space heaters on a flat, level surface. Never place heaters on cabinets, tables, furniture, on carpet, or near draperies or other combustibles. Make sure to unplug the heater before you leave the house or go to bed.

Never place clothing or any other objects on a space heater to dry them.

5. Candle Safety Tip -

Never leave burning candles unattended.

6. Fireplace Safety Tips -

Get your chimney inspected each year to make sure that it is safe. Inspect and repair any cracks in the fireplace and chimney. Hire a professional chimney sweep to clean out your chimney every fall.

In addition, always use fireplace screens (spark guards) to keep sparks and fire debris inside the fireplace. Make sure that combustible materials are stored at least three feet away from your fireplace.

Burn only seasoned hardwoods and build it right using kindling instead of fuel (gasoline, etc.) to start the fire. Be sure not to overload your fireplace. Never leave a fire unattended.

7. Natural Gas Heaters and Fireplaces -

Have all gas lines and connections professionally inspected before use each season. If you smell gas, do not light the appliance. Leave the home immediately and call 911, or your local fire department or gas company.

8. Protect the Outside of Your Home -

Stack firewood outdoors at least 30 feet away from your home.

Keep the roof clear of leaves, pine needles and other debris. Cover the chimney with a mesh screen spark arrester. Remove branches hanging above the chimney, flues or vents.

Semper vigilans!

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Family Fire Safety Tips

Teach your children how to respond in the event of a fire. Make sure they know how to dial 911.

Establish and practice a fire escape plan with your family that includes a designated meeting area outside the home.

Practice stop, drop and roll with your children. Practice crawling so they learn how to escape beneath the smoke.

Teach your family multiple ways to escape from every room in your home in the event of a fire.

Make sure that there are a sufficient number of smoke detectors in your home, and check them each month to ensure that they are in working order.

Make sure everyone in your family knows when and how to correctly use a fire extinguisher.

Do not place lit candles where they can be reached by children. Never leave burning candles unattended. Do not leave candles burning when you go to bed.

Don't leave cooking food unattended on the stove. Keep everything that might be flammable away from your stove.

Make sure all flammable substances are properly stored in safe containers and out of reach of children.

Safety Tips for Holidays

Do not use candles in Halloween jack-o-lanterns. Flashlights are much safer. Make sure that children's costumes are made with fire retardant and reflective materials.

Use only fire retardant holiday decorations. Make sure all holiday lights and extension cords have been tested by an organization such as Factory Mutual or Underwriters Laboratory.

Natural Christmas trees are beautiful, but if they are not watered regularly, needles can dry out and pose a potential fire hazard. Make sure your tree has plenty of water by checking it daily.

Children are curious and may want to play with ornaments on the tree. Move the ornaments that are breakable or have metal hooks towards the top of the tree. That makes room at the bottom for the ornaments that are safer for young children.

Don't Give the Gift of Food Poisoning

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides some holiday food safety tips. Here are a few:

- Do not rinse raw meat and poultry before cooking.
- Use a food thermometer to make sure meat is cooked to a safe temperature.
- Refrigerate food within two hours.
- Thanksgiving /Christmas leftovers are safe for 4 days in the refrigerator.
- Bring sauces, soups and gravies to a rolling boil when reheating.
- When storing turkey, be sure to cut the leftovers in small pieces so it will chill faster.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water when handling food.

Traveling and Home Safety for the Holidays

Many people choose to travel during the holidays by car, which has the highest fatality rate of any major form of transportation.

Use a designated driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a holiday party. Alcohol, over-the-counter or illegal drugs all cause impairment. Alcohol contributes to nearly 1/3 of all vehicle accidents.

Make sure every person in the vehicle is properly seat belted, no matter how long or short the distance being traveled. ***Put your cell phone away!*** Distracted driving causes 1/4 of all crashes.

Make sure your vehicle is properly maintained, and keep an emergency kit with you. Be prepared for heavy traffic, and possibly heavy snow. Refuel often.

If you have guests staying in your home, make sure trip and fall areas have night lights or easy-to-reach lamps in case they need to get up during the night.

If you are visiting someone else's home or you have guests in your home, make sure all medications are kept up and out of sight from young children.

Understand Fall Burning Regulations

Learn the outdoor burning regulations in your area, and do not engage in illegal burning of leaves and other outdoor debris.