

Is your family *safe* from fire?

What you don't know can kill you!

There are steps you can take to reduce the risk of fire in your home and ensure that you would be alerted to any emergency and able to escape.

Wood Stoves and Fireplaces

- Have your chimney and fireplace cleaned and inspected yearly for creosote build-up, cracks, crumbling bricks or mortar and any obstructions. The inspection should be done by a professional chimney sweep.
- Burn *only* dry, well-seasoned hardwood to minimize chimney or flue buildups. *Do not burn trash or plastic.*
- Place fireplace ashes in a covered metal container and place it outside at *least* three feet away from the house and anything that could burn. Don't set the container of ashes on a wood porch floor or any other combustible surface.
- Always use a screen made of sturdy metal or heat tempered glass to prevent sparks from escaping a fireplace.
- If you have children, be sure to use a child guard screen barrier for your wood stove.

Space Heaters

- Be sure to keep all combustibles, including furniture, curtains, papers etc. *at least* 3 feet away from a space heater.
- Check all portable heater power cords to be sure they aren't frayed, cracked or get hot when plugged in. If so, do not use.
- *Never* use extension cords with portable heaters.
- Always turn portable heaters off when the family is out of the house or when everyone is sleeping.
- An adult should always be present when a space heater is in use.
- Make sure your portable electric heater is UL approved, has a temperature control, and is equipped with tip-over shut off protection.



Electrical Outlets and Cords

- Overloaded outlets and extension cords can cause fires.
- Only purchase UL-approved extension cords. Be cautious of less expensive cords with imposter certification.
- Select the proper extension cord of the correct length and gauge for the intended use. Be sure cords have the proper current or wattage rating for the intended use.
- *Never* cut or splice extension cords for any reason. A splice creates a weak point and using electrical tape does not make it safe.
- Electrical cords should never be run under rugs or be coiled up because they are too long. Doing so will cause the cord to overheat and potentially start a fire.
- Use covers to protect children from the possibility of getting shocked by unused outlets.
- Have a licensed electrician install ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI's) outlets in outside locations and any inside locations where water is present such as in bathrooms, kitchens and laundry rooms.

Cooking

Never leave stovetop cooking unattended.

- If you have a stovetop grease fire:
 - Turn the burner off and cover the pan with a lid to cut off the oxygen to the fire. Let the pan cool before removing the lid.
 - Never try to take a burning pan to the sink.
 - Never use water on a grease fire.
 - Use a fire extinguisher rated for grease fires only if you are trained. If you stand too close and use the fire extinguisher, you can spread the flaming grease all over the kitchen.
- If you have an oven fire:
 - Turn the oven off
 - Keep the door closed until the fire is out and the oven cools
- Never leave an oven door open to heat a room. The oven can overheat and catch fire.

Carbon Monoxide (CO)

What is CO?

CO is odorless, colorless, tasteless gas that can kill. It is produced from burning any fuel. Any appliance in your home that uses fuel is a possible source of CO.

- When appliances and vents are not in good working order, there is danger from CO poisoning.
- Other sources include
 - Running autos in a closed garage
 - Faulty oil, wood, or gas heating units, or chimneys
 - Gas or oil hot water heaters
 - Charcoal grills when used indoors
 - Kerosene or fuel oil room heaters
 - Gas stoves and ranges
 - Fireplaces, woodstoves, pellet stoves

How does CO kill?

Carbon monoxide displaces the body's essential oxygen. It can cause flu-like symptoms, vomiting, loss of consciousness, brain damage and eventually death. Unborn babies, infants, senior citizen and people with heart problems or breathing difficulties are especially at risk for CO poisoning.

How do I protect my family from CO poisoning?

- Install CO detectors in your home
 - At least one near sleeping areas
 - Another one outside furnace room

- Make sure manufacturer's instructions and local building codes are followed when installing fuel-burning appliances.

- Have your heating system inspected and serviced annually.

Smoke Detectors

- When there is a fire, seconds count. Working smoke detectors not only provide early warning of a fire, but they can more than double your chance of surviving. Smoke detectors can mean the difference between life and death.

- It is recommended that smoke detectors be installed on every level of your home, outside each sleeping area and in each bedroom.

- Smoke detectors should be tested at least once a month.

- Change smoke detector batteries twice a year. A good way to remember to do this is to change your batteries in the fall when you turn your clocks back, and change them again in the spring when you turn the clocks ahead.

- Smoke and CO detectors should be replaced with updated detectors every ten years.

Home Escape Plans

Why do I need an escape plan?

Most fatal home fires happen between midnight and 8 a.m., when people are asleep. When your smoke detector sounds, you may have less than 2 ½ minutes to get out. Every family needs an escape plan.

- Have a family meeting to make your plan and to be sure everyone knows it. A good plan includes knowing two ways out of every room and having a family meeting place outside your home.

- Drill your escape plan at least twice a year.

- Once you are safely out of your home, stay out.

- Call 911 from a neighbor's house or other location.

- For more information on "Exit Drills in the Home" or EDITH contact our office for a brochure.

For more information, call the Westchester County Department of Emergency Services at (914) 231-1856.

