



Fire Safety Tips

Heating Safety

- Half of home heating fires are reported in December, January, and February. Follow these tips to prevent most heating fires.
- Keep anything that can burn at least three-feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Have a three-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer’s instructions.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Test smoke alarms monthly

Portable Fireplace Safety

- While these products provide warmth during cold months, the fuel device and open flame can be dangerous.
- A portable ethanol burning fireplace, and the fuel, should only be used by adults.
- Clean up any fuel spillage and be sure all liquid has evaporated before lighting the fireplace.
- Light the fireplace using a utility lighter or long match.
- An adult should always be present when a portable fireplace is burning.
- Place the fireplace on a sturdy surface away from table edges.
- It’s a good idea to crack a window open for a fresh supply of air.
- Never try to move a lit fireplace or one that is still hot.

- Don't pour ethanol fuel in a device that is lit or not completely cool. It may result in a fire or injury.
- Allow the device to cool down for at least 15 minutes before refueling.
- Extinguish the flame when you leave the room, home or go to sleep.
- Keep anything that can burn children and pets at least 3 feet from the fireplace.
- Store lighters and matches out of the reach of children.

Candle Safety

- Candles are open flames and can easily ignite anything that can burn.
- Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Avoid the use of candles in the bedroom and other areas where people may fall asleep.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.
- Use candle holders that are sturdy, and won't tip over easily.
- Put candle holders on a sturdy, uncluttered surface.
- Light candles carefully. Keep your hair and any loose clothing away from the flame.
- Don't burn a candle all the way down — put it out before it gets too close to the holder or container.
- Never use a candle if oxygen is used in the home.
- Have flashlights and battery-powered lighting ready to use during a power outage. Never use candles.
- Never leave children alone in a room with a burning candle.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.

Carbon Monoxide Safety

- Carbon Monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels burn completely. Heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel can be sources of carbon monoxide.
- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes or standards. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Choose a CO alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Call your local fire department's non-emergency number to find out what number to call if the CO alarm sounds.
- Test CO alarms at least once a month; replace them according to the

manufacturer's instructions.

- If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, call the fire department.
- If the CO alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for. Call for help from a fresh air location and stay there until emergency personnel.
- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not covered with snow.
- During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.
- A generator should be used in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors and vent openings.
- Gas or charcoal grills can produce CO — only used outside.

Dryer Safety

- Follow these safety tips while using your dryer to avoid house fires or damage to your dryer.
- Have your dryer installed and serviced by a professional.
- Do not use the dryer without a lint filter.
- Make sure you clean the lint filter before or after each load of laundry. Remove lint that has collected around the drum.
- Rigid or flexible metal venting material should be used to sustain proper air flow and drying time.
- Make sure the air exhaust vent pipe is not restricted and the outdoor vent flap will open when the dryer is operating. Once a year, or more often if you notice that it is taking longer than normal for your clothes to dry, clean lint out of the vent pipe or have a dryer lint removal service do it for you.
- Keep dryers in good working order. Gas dryers should be inspected by a professional to make sure that the gas line and connection are intact and free of leaks.
- Make sure the right plug and outlet are used and that the machine is connected properly.
- Follow the manufacturer's operating instructions and don't overload your dryer.
- Turn the dryer off if you leave home or when you go to bed.
- Dryers should be properly grounded.
- Check the outdoor vent flap to make sure it is not covered by snow.
- Keep the area around your dryer clear of things that can burn, like

boxes, cleaning supplies and clothing, etc.

- Clothes that have come in contact with flammable substances, like gasoline, paint thinner, or similar solvents should be laid outside to dry, then can be washed and dried as usual.

Electrical Safety

- While electricity makes our lives easier, we need to be cautious when using common electric appliances by following these tips.
- Have all electrical work done by a qualified electrician.
- When you are buying or remodeling a home, have it inspected by a qualified electrician.
- Only plug one heat-producing appliance (such as a coffee maker, toaster, space heater, etc.) into a receptacle outlet at a time.
- Major appliances (refrigerators, dryers, washers, stoves, air conditioners, etc.) should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet. Extension cords and plug strips should not be used.
- Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) are a kind of circuit breaker that shuts off electricity when a dangerous condition occurs. Consider having them installed in your home. Use a qualified electrician.
- Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to reduce the risk of shock. GFCIs shut off an electrical circuit when it becomes a shock hazard. They should be installed inside the home in bathrooms, kitchens, garages and basements. All outdoor receptacles should be GFCI protected.
- Test AFCIs and GFCIs once a month to make sure they are working properly.
- Check electrical cords to make sure they are not running across doorways or under carpets. Extension cords are intended for temporary use. Have a qualified electrician add more receptacle outlets so you don't have to use extension cords.
- Use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or fixture. There should be a sticker that indicates the maximum wattage light bulb to use.

Call an electrician or your landlord if you have the following problems:

- Frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers
- A tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance
- Discolored or warm wall outlets
- A burning or rubbery smell coming from an appliance
- Flickering or dimming lights
- Sparks from an outlet

Escape Planning

- Plan ahead so everyone in your home knows what to do in the event of a house fire.
- MAKE a home escape plan. Draw a map of your home showing all doors and windows. Discuss the plan with everyone in your home.
- Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible. Make sure all doors and windows leading outside open easily.
- Have an outside meeting place (like a tree, light pole or mailbox) a safe distance from the home where everyone should meet.
- Practice your home fire drill at night and during the day with everyone in your home, twice a year.
- Practice using different ways out.
- Teach children how to escape on their own in case you can't help them.
- Close doors behind you as you leave.
- If the smoke alarm sounds, get out and stay out. Never go back inside for people or pets.
- If you have to escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke on your way out.
- Call the fire department from outside your home.

Grilling Safety

- While grilling is a popular way to prepare food, they can cause burn injuries. Follow these tips to avoid injury.
- Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.
- The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.
- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- Never leave your grill unattended.
- Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.
- There are several ways to get the charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel.
- If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use.
- When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before

disposing in a metal container.

- Check your gas tank for leaks before using for the first time each year
- If you smell gas while cooking with a propane tank, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department.

Home Sprinkler Safety

- Home sprinkler systems can save lives during a house fire. They are often able to extinguish the fire, if activated properly, before the fire department arrives.
- Home fire sprinklers save lives and property. In many situations, a family who has survived a fire will also have their “home” to live in and enough of the items and space in their home to continue living their lives as they did before.
- The cost of a home fire sprinkler system in a new home averages \$1.61 per sprinklered square foot totaling an amount similar to what is spent for carpet upgrades, paving stone driveway or a whirlpool bath. Source: Fire Protection Research Foundation Study 2008.
- A home fire sprinkler system can reduce the homeowner’s insurance premium.
- Fire departments typically use roughly 10 times as much water as a fire sprinkler would use to contain a fire. Source: Fire Protection Research Foundation Study 2010.
- Fire sprinklers are environmentally friendly. They can reduce the amount of water run-off and pollution, fire damage by up to 71%, and water usage to fight a home fire by as much as 91%. Source: FM Global and Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition Study 2010.
- Cigar smoke or burnt toast will not activate a fire sprinkler. Only the high temperature of a fire will activate the sprinkler.
- A home fire sprinkler system is easy to maintain. Just inspect your home to make sure the sprinklers are not blocked by something that would prevent the water from coming out such as paint and be sure the main control valve is never turned off.
- Home fire sprinklers are effective in cold and warm climates. Guidelines have been created for the proper installation of systems to avoid pipes freezing. A home fire sprinkler system should be winterized the same as you winterize a domestic water supply.
- If MOVING into an apartment or condominium building, make sure common areas and individual apartments are sprinklered
- If building a new home or remodeling an existing home, consider installing a home fire sprinkler system

Light Bulb Safety

- If a CFL Breaks CFLs are made of glass and can break. Be careful when removing from packaging and installing or removing from a socket.
- If CFL breaks, open a window and make sure people and pets leave the room. Turn off AC and collect any broken glass and visible powder. Discard the debris properly by contacting your local government to find out how to dispose.
- When a CFL burns out it may smoke and the plastic may blacken which is normal.

Manufactured Home Safety

- Follow these tips to keep your family safe if you own or rent a manufactured home.
- Be sure your home has enough smoke alarms. You need a smoke alarm inside each bedroom, outside each sleeping area and in or near the family/live room area(s). For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms so when one sounds, they all sound.
- TEST smoke alarms at least once a month.
- HAVE a home fire escape plan that includes two ways out of every room and an outside meeting place. Make sure all ways out of the home are easy to use. Practice your fire drill at least twice a year.
- If smoke alarms sound when you are cooking, consider moving the alarm further from the kitchen area or install a photoelectric type alarm which is less sensitive to cooking.
- NEVER remove or disable a smoke alarm.
- CONSIDER having a licensed electrician inspect the electrical system to be sure it is safe and meets the applicable National Electrical Code® requirements.
- Always stay in the kitchen when frying on the stovetop.
- Have smokers smoke outside the home. Provide large, non-tip ashtrays and empty them frequently. Douse butts with water before throwing away
- Never store items under the home.

Microwave Safety

- A microwave is a convenient appliance but it is still important to keep these safety tips in mind.
- PLUG the microwave oven directly into the wall outlet — never use an extension cord.
- MAKE sure the microwave oven is at a safe height, within easy reach of all users.

- OPEN food slowly, away from the face. Hot steam or the food itself can cause burns.
- FOOD heats unevenly in microwave ovens. Stir and test before eating or giving to children.
- NEVER heat a baby bottle in the microwave. Since a microwave oven heats unevenly, it can create hot pockets, leading to burns. Warm a bottle in a bowl of warm — not hot or boiling — water, or by running it under the tap.
- Never use aluminum foil or metal in a microwave oven.
- If there is a fire in the microwave, keep the door closed, turn off the oven, and unplug it from the wall.

Oxygen Safety

- Homes where medical oxygen is being used need to take extra precaution to keep people safe from fire and burns.
- There is no safe way to smoke in the home when oxygen is in use. If a patient is on oxygen, they should not smoke.
- Candles, matches, wood stoves and even sparking toys, can be ignition sources and should not be used in the home.
- Keep oxygen cylinders at least five feet from a heat source, open flames or electrical devices.
- Body oil, hand lotion and items containing oil and grease can easily ignite. Keep oil and grease away where oxygen is in use.
- Never use aerosol sprays containing combustible materials near the oxygen.

Thanksgiving Safety

- Safety in the kitchen, especially on Thanksgiving day when there is a lot of activity and people, is important.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking on the stove top so you can keep an eye on the food.
- Stay in the home when cooking your turkey and check on it frequently.
- Keep children away from the stove. The stove will be hot and kids should stay 3 feet away.
- Make sure kids stay away from hot food and liquids. The steam or splash from vegetables, gravy or coffee could cause serious burns.
- Keep the floor clear so you don't trip over kids, toys, pocketbooks or bags.
- Keep knives out of the reach of children.
- Be sure electric cords from an electric knife, coffee maker, plate warmer or mixer are not dangling off the counter within easy reach of

a child.

- Keep matches and utility lighters out of the reach of children — up high in a locked cabinet.
- Never leave children alone in a room with a lit candle.
- Make sure your smoke alarms are working. Test them by pushing the test button.

**Contact the City of Westminster Fire Department with
any questions at 864-647-3206.**