

S a f e t y - P l u s

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SAFETY IS OUR ONLY BUSINESS

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HOW TO MAKE A HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN

- ☺ Draw a map of your home. Show all doors and windows.
- ☺ Visit each room. Find two ways out.
- ☺ All windows and doors should open easily. You should be able to use them to get outside.
- ☺ Make sure your home has smoke alarms. Push the test button to make sure each alarm is working.
- ☺ Pick a meeting place outside. It should be in front of your home.
- ☺ Everyone will meet at the meeting place.
- ☺ Make sure your house or building number can be seen from the street.
- ☺ Talk about your plan with everyone in your home.
- ☺ Learn the emergency phone number for your fire department.
- ☺ Practice your home fire escape drill!

Parents: Children don't always awake when the smoke alarm sounds. Know what your child will do before a fire occurs.

Get more information on smoke alarms and escape planning at www.nfpa.org/factsheets.

Please be sure that at least one person in the family is knowledgeable in how to properly use a fire extinguisher. If you need assistance with training, give us a call at 505-884-2274.

THE GREAT CHICAGO FIRE

Commemorating a conflagration

Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, the tragic 1871 conflagration that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres. The fire began on October 8, but continued into and did most of its damage on October 9, 1871.

According to popular legend, the fire broke out after a cow - belonging to Mrs. Catherine O'Leary - kicked over a lamp, setting first the barn, then the whole city on fire. Chances are you've heard some version of this story yourself; people have been blaming the Great Chicago Fire on the cow and Mrs. O'Leary, for more than 130 years. But recent research by Chicago historian Robert Cromie has helped to debunk this version of events.

The 'Moo' myth

Like any good story, the 'case of the cow' has some truth to it. The great fire almost certainly started near the barn where Mrs. O'Leary kept her five milking cows. But there is no proof that O'Leary was in the barn when the fire broke out - or that a jumpy cow sparked the blaze. Mrs.

O'Leary herself swore that she'd been in bed early that night, and that the cows were also tucked in for the evening. But if a cow wasn't to blame for the huge fire, what was? Over the years, journalists and historians have offered plenty of theories. Some blamed the blaze on a couple of neighborhood boys who were near the barn sneaking cigarettes. Others believed that a neighbor of the O'Leary's may have started the fire. Some people have speculated that a fiery meteorite may have fallen to earth on October 8, starting several fires that day - in Michigan and Wisconsin, as well as in Chicago.



In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation, and since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed on the Sunday through Saturday period in which October 9 falls. According to the National Archives and Records Administration's Library Information Center, Fire Prevention Week is the longest running public health and safety observance on record. The President of the United States has signed a proclamation proclaiming a national observance during that week every year since 1925.

Stopping a Fire Before it Starts: 5 Things You Can Do Today

When it comes to fire safety, information abounds. But as a busy parent, it's often hard to find the time to wade through the information and figure out what you need to do to keep your family safe.

Here are five simple things that you can do today to help protect your family from fire.



Do a Smoke Alarm Audit

Do an audit of your home's smoke alarms. *(If you don't have UL listed smoke alarms, make a plan to install them on each level of the home, especially near sleeping areas).* Check placement: Smoke rises, so smoke alarms should be located on a ceiling or high on a wall. Alarms mounted on the ceiling should be at least four inches away from the nearest wall and those mounted on walls should be four to twelve inches down from the ceiling. Test your alarms and be sure that they can be heard in bedrooms even when the doors are closed. If not, install smoke alarms in the bedrooms. Make sure that your kids know what the alarms sound like. Replace alarms that are older than 10 years and replace any alarm that has been painted over.



Make Extinguishers Handy

Be sure that you have at least one or more UL listed fire extinguishers in your home. An ABC-type extinguisher is a good all-purpose choice for fires in the home. Check the gauge located on the extinguisher to see if it needs to be replaced or recharged. Also be sure that the fire extinguisher is in an easily accessible location. Remember that fire extinguishers are not designed to fight large or spreading fires. Your number one priority is to have an escape plan and to get out safely. If the fire is small and contained and the room is not filled with smoke, get everyone out and call the fire department; then, you may use the fire extinguisher to control the fire.



Talk Prevention with Your Kids

Talk to your kids about how they can prevent fires. Children under age five are especially curious about fire and need to start learning about the tremendous danger. Take the mystery out of fire and make sure that your kids know the following safety tips:

Never play with matches, lighters or candles.

Never play with electrical cords and never put anything in a socket.

Blankets or clothes should never be thrown on top of lamps.

Don't turn up a heater without a grown-up's permission.

If your clothes catch on fire, **stop, drop and roll.**



Look at Your Home From Your Child's Perspective

Think about how your child sees potential fire hazards in your home by getting down on your hands and knees with them and taking a look around. See any dangling cords that could cause a problem if pulled? Enticing heaters or other appliances? Make adjustments to your home according to what you find.



Avoid Overloading Sockets and Cords

Do a walk-through of your home. If you see sockets with too many cords plugged in or even too many extension cords around the house, it may be time to have extra outlets installed by a professional. Always pay attention to the acceptable wattage for cords and lamps. Also look for extension cords that are "tacked up" or run under a rug as these could be a real fire hazard for kids and adults.

*For more useful tips and information,
visit the National Fire Protection Association at www.nfpa.org*

A WORD FROM RHONDA: OCTOBER— Please remember the importance of fire safety in your workplace as well as your home. October is a great month to make sure you check all of your fire extinguishers and smoke detectors as well as making sure that you have a fire escape plan in place in case of an emergency. If you have any questions regarding fire safety information, we would be happy to help out. Always remember your animals in planning for fire escape as well!