

FIRE SAFETY FOR SENIORS

Bloomington Fire Department
Public Education Office

Objectives

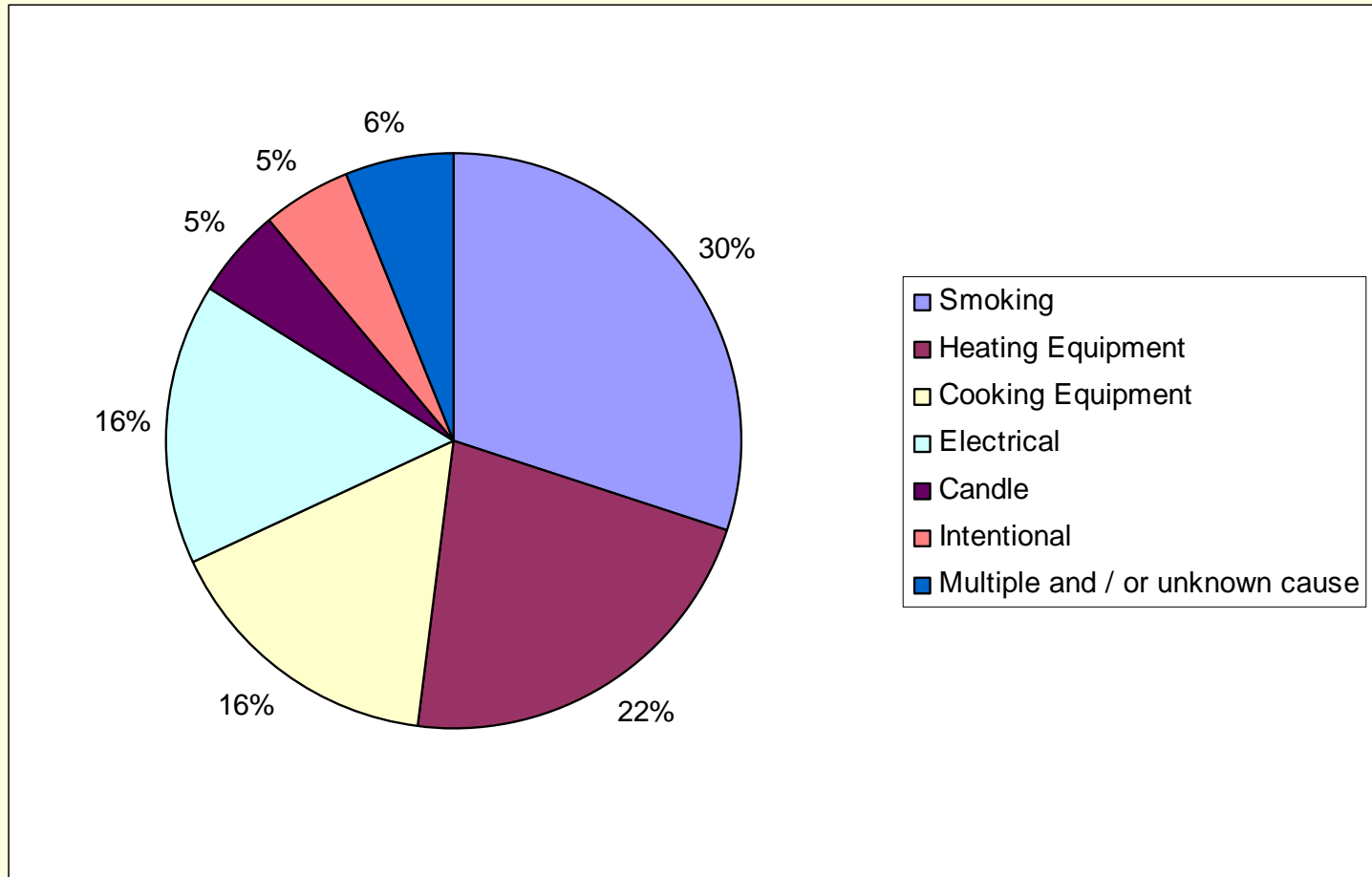
- Learn about the following:

- Smoking Fires
- Electrical Fires
- Home Heating Fires
- Smoke Alarm Maintenance
- Creating a Fire Safety Checklist

- Learn How to:

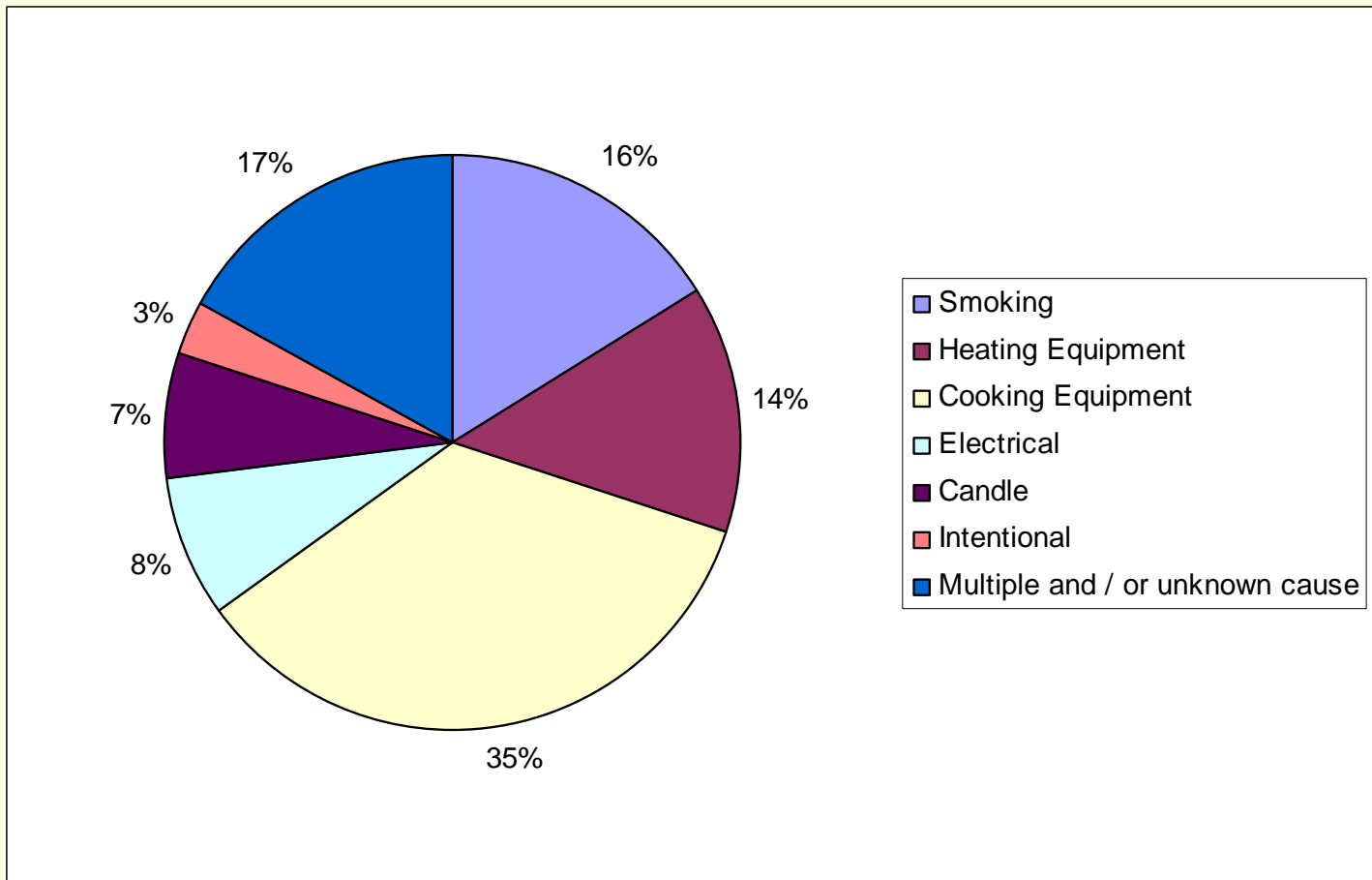
- Prevent Kitchen Fires and Injuries
- Treat a Burn
- Put out a fire on your clothing
- Plan your fire escape

Leading Causes of Fire Deaths in the Home for Adults 65 Years of Age and Older



Statistics taken from "Characteristics of Home Fire Victims" NFPA, July 2008

Leading Causes of Fire Injuries in the Home for Adults 65 Years of Age and Older



Statistics taken from "Characteristics of Home Fire Victims" NFPA, July 2008

PREVENT SMOKING FIRES

SMOKERS BEWARE

Smokers are seven times more likely than non-smokers to be fire victims. Smoking materials are the **NUMBER ONE** cause of home fires that kill seniors.

If you or others in your home smoke, prevent fires **before** they start:



- Use large, deep non-tip ashtrays. Never leave a lit cigarette in an ashtray or leave an ashtray on the arm of a couch or chair.



- Before going to bed or going out, check between, on and under upholstery and cushions for cigarette butts that may be smoldering.



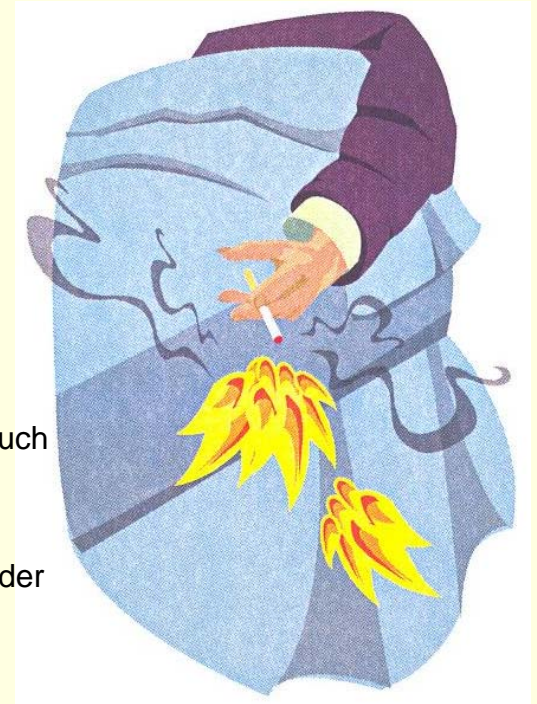
- Douse cigarette butts completely with water before discarding them.



- Make it a **RULE** to never smoke in bed or while lying down, especially when you are drowsy or taking medication that makes you sleepy.




- **NEVER** permit smoking around the storage or use of an oxygen tank.



PREVENT ELECTRICAL FIRES

- Use light bulbs with the appropriate wattage for the size of the light fixture. A bulb with too many watts may lead to overheating and fire.

CAUTION: TO REDUCE THE RISK OF FIRE USE
60WATT TYPE A  OR SMALLER LAMP
120V 60Hz ONLY
MADE IN CHINA UNPLUG TO REPLACE BULB

- Give televisions, stereos and computers plenty of clearance to prevent over-heating.

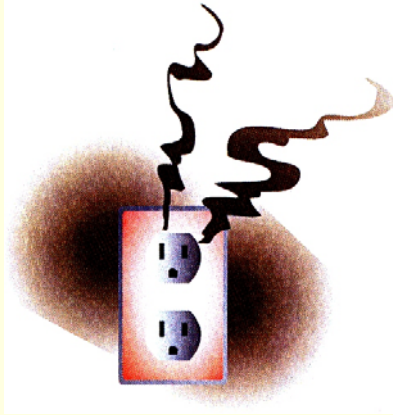


- Use extension cords for temporary use only.
- Protect all electrical cords from damage. Do not run cords under carpets or rugs, or hang them from nails.
- Never use an appliance with a damaged or frayed cord.

- To prevent overloading, never plug more than two appliances into an outlet at once or “piggyback” extra appliances on extension cords or wall outlets.



PREVENT ELECTRICAL FIRES



- Ensure that outlet and switch plates are in good condition. If the outlet or plate is hot to the touch, immediately unplug the cord and have a qualified electrician check your wiring.
- If an appliance develops a different smell, makes unusual sounds or the cord feels warm to the touch, pull the plug and discontinue use.

If the appliance continues to burn or smoke -

Call the Fire Department (911).

- Replace unsafe electrical appliances such as coffee makers and toaster ovens.
- When purchasing an electrical appliance, such as a toaster or coffee maker, be sure that the equipment has the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Mark, which shows that the product has been safety tested.



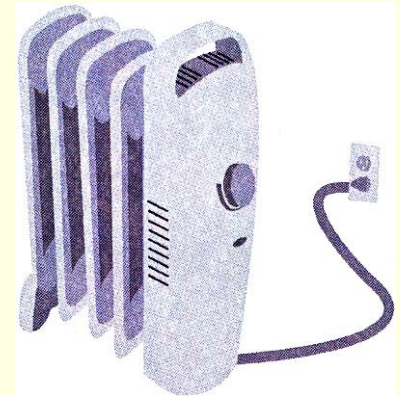
! WARNING

The potential for electrical shock or fire from electrical wiring and appliances is very real.

PREVENT HOME HEATING FIRES

SPACE HEATER SAFETY

- When purchasing an electrical space heater, look for heaters with automatic shut-off features.
- Only use equipment that has the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Mark, which shows that the product has been safety tested.
- Give space heaters space.** Place the heater at least three feet from any combustible material, such as bedding and furniture.
- Keep young children and pets away from space heaters.
- While heater cords normally become warm during use, stop using the heater if the cord becomes hot.
- NEVER** use an extension cord with a space heater.
- Place the heater on the floor; never place on a counter top or furniture.
- Turn off/unplug the space heater whenever you leave the room or go to sleep.

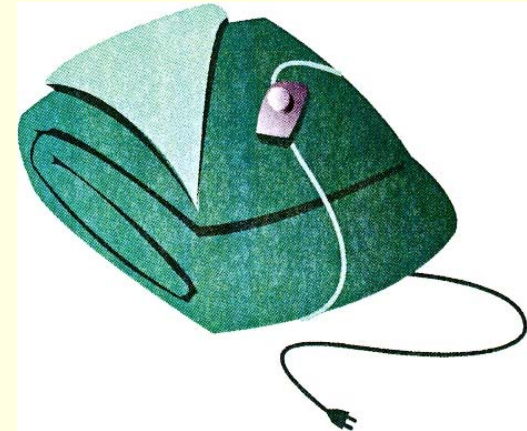


Many people use space heaters during cold weather months. However, space heaters are responsible for two out of every three home-heating fires.



ELECTRIC BLANKET SAFETY

- Only use electric blankets that have the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Mark, which shows that the product has been safety tested.
- Discontinue the use of any electric blanket that has broken or frayed cords.
- Avoid tucking the electric blanket in at the sides of the bed. This can cause excessive heat build-up.
- Avoid placing other blankets or comforters on top of an electric blanket while it is in use.
- Never use an electric blanket that is wet, soiled or wrinkled.
- It is best to warm a bed with your electric blanket and turn it off before going to bed.
- Wash your electric blanket infrequently, because repeated washings can damage the electric circuitry.



**If your electric blanket is more than 10 years old,
the best advice is to buy a new one!**

Old or damaged electric blankets cause thousands of fires a year that result in deaths and injuries.

PREVENT KITCHEN FIRES AND INJURIES

Remember to “stand by your pan” and never leave cooking food unattended. Heat cooking oils gradually and use extra caution when deep-frying.

Always wear short or tight-fitting sleeves. Long, loose sleeves are more likely to catch fire, and exposed skin could burn.

Turn pot handles inward toward the back of the stove to prevent accidental bumping of the pan and causing injury. Use oven mitts to protect hands and arms from burns.

Cooking accidents are the leading cause of fire and fire injuries in the home.

Cook at low to medium temperature settings. To prevent scalds, let microwave heated foods and liquids stand for a minute or two before touching.



TO PREVENT HOT WATER SCALDS:

To prevent hot water scalds, set hot water heater thermostats at 110 degrees F. For added safety, install anti-scald devices on all faucets.



RECIPE FOR KITCHEN SAFETY

Follow this recipe for safety and you will prevent most cooking fires and burn injuries.

Ingredients:

2 watchful eyes



1 or 2 potholders/
oven mitts



2 short or tight-fitting
sleeves



1 clean area around the stove,
free of anything that can burn



1 pot lid



1 large box of
baking soda



Should a stove fire occur:

- Turn off the stove.
- Use baking soda to extinguish the flame
- Slide a pan lid onto the pan.



DO NOT USE WATER!

Water will cause splashing and spread the fire.

Do not attempt to pick up the pot or pan and carry it away from the stove.

TREATING A BURN

Burns can be caused by direct contact with an open flame, hot liquids/grease or from a hot surface. Many burns may be deeper than they appear and may require immediate medical attention. Remove clothing from the affected area, but do not attempt to remove clothing that sticks.



Treat with cool running water.



Never apply ointment, grease or butter to the burned area.

If you get a burn:



Cover the burn with a sterile pad or clean sheet.



Seek immediate medical attention to prevent burn inflammation and infections.



FOR CHEMICAL AND ELECTRICAL BURNS:

For chemical burns, caused by products such as oven or bathroom cleaners: Flush with cool water for 20 to 30 minutes. If eyes are affected, also flush for at least 20 minutes.

For electrical burns, turn off electrical source before touching victim. Check victim for pulse and breathing, start CPR if needed. Care-givers are encouraged to learn CPR.

CLOTHING FIRES

IF ANY PART OF YOU OR YOUR CLOTHING CATCHES ON FIRE:



- Cover your face with your hands.



- Drop to the ground.



- Roll over and over.



If physical limitations prevent you from taking these steps, try to smother the flames with a fire-resistant wool blanket or rug.



REMEMBER

Do not try to fight the fire yourself.

DO NOT RUN or try to put out the fire with your hands.

FIRE ESCAPE PLANNING

DON'T BE SCARED – BE PREPARED



- Make sure a phone is next to your bed and within reach (or a TTY/TDD device, if you use one).



- Keep your eyeglasses, keys, and hearing aids (if necessary) within reach next to your bed.



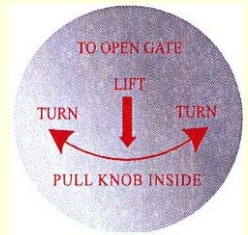
- Make sure lamp or light switches are within reach.



- Practice unlocking and opening windows, security gates and doors.



- Keep stairways and exits clear of clutter and storage. Do not store anything on building fire escapes.



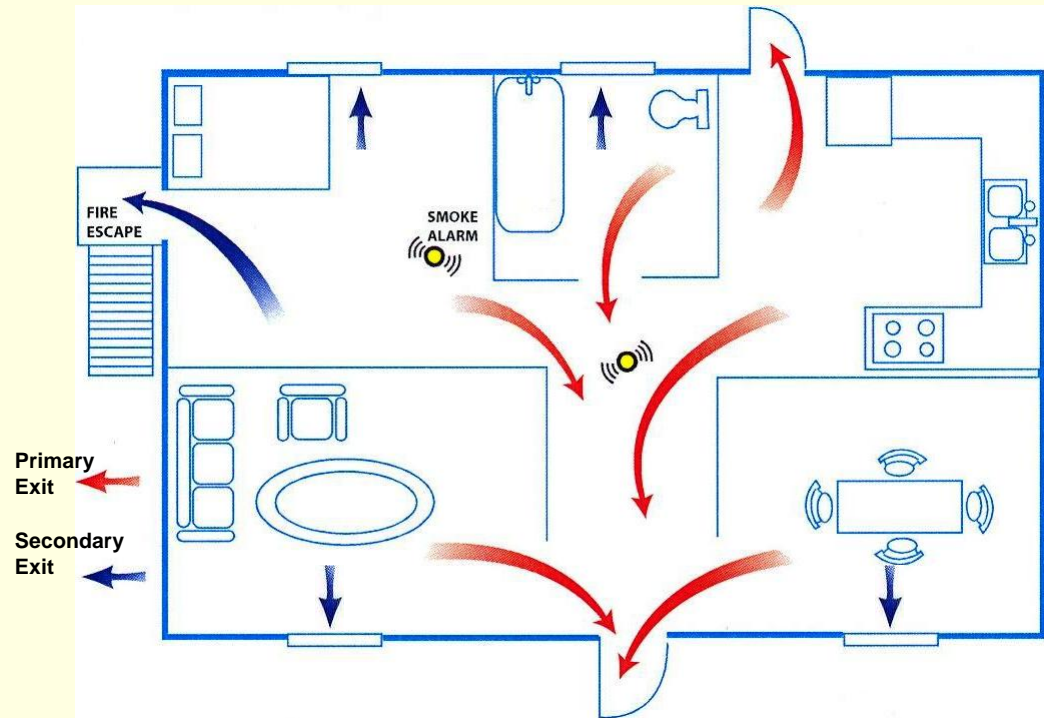
Can you survive a fire in your home?

More than 50% of home fire deaths occur between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., when most people are sleeping.

ESCAPE PLAN

Be prepared by having an escape plan. It is one of the most important steps you can take to save your own life!

- Know two exits from your home, apartment, or building.
- If you live in an apartment building, know where the exit stairwells are located.
- If you live in a multi-story home, consider sleeping on the ground floor near an exit.
- Have a designated meeting place to go to, once you leave the building.



KNOW WHAT TO DO

If there is a fire in your home or apartment:

- Do not try to fight the fire yourself.
- Do not stop to gather personal belongings.



- Get out by using your fire escape plan, using the closest or safest exit.

- If smoke is present, stay as low to the floor as possible and cover your mouth.

- Close the door on your way out.

- Use stairways to exit the building.
DO NOT USE THE ELEVATOR.



If you are trapped, close all the doors between you and the fire and call 911. Tell the dispatcher where you are located.



MAKING THE RIGHT DECISION

If you live in a residential apartment building:

NON-FIRE PROOF BUILDINGS:

- Use your fire escape plan by using the closest or safest exit.
- Check the apartment door with the back of your hand. If it is hot, do not open the door. Go to your secondary exit (usually a window).
- If the door is cool, but there is smoke in the hallway, assess the situation and your own abilities to exit safely from the building. Stay as low to the floor as possible and cover your mouth. Close the door on your way out!
- Use stairways to exit the building. **DO NOT USE THE ELEVATOR.**

If you determine there is too much smoke in the hallway, close your apartment door and exit from your secondary exit.

FIRE PROOF BUILDINGS:

If there is a fire in your building, but not in your apartment and you live in a fire proof building, it is safer to stay inside and keep the door closed. Call 911 and give the dispatcher your apartment number.

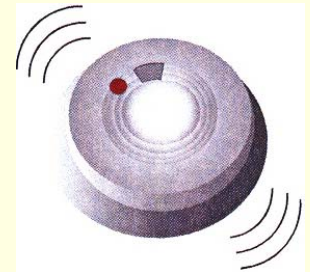
Contact your building owner regarding your building's fire safety plan and construction type. Planning is the key to protecting yourself and your family.

SMOKE ALARM MAINTENANCE

Follow these safety tips to ensure that you will have an early warning in case of a fire:

A smoke alarm is the single most valuable life-saving device you can have in your home.

- Install a smoke alarm outside and inside each bedroom or sleeping area and on every level of your home.
- Test the alarm once a month by pressing the test button, to ensure that it works properly.
- Chirping alarms are warnings that the battery is low. Replace batteries at least once a year (preferably twice a year – spring and fall, when clocks are changed for daylight saving time).
- Purchase alarms with a 10-year lithium battery to eliminate the need to change the batteries every six months. Lithium batteries are more expensive than typical 9-volt batteries; however, they are designed to last the life of the alarm. However, the alarm battery still must be tested once a month.



SMOKE ALARM MAINTENANCE

- If you are hearing-impaired, install smoke alarms with strobe (flashing) lights. These alarms feature a special, high-density light that can wake a sleeping person.
- Install smoke alarms with a hush or silence button feature for nuisance alarms due to cooking vapors or steam. Rather than removing the battery, this feature allows you to silence the unit for 10 to 15 minutes while you clear the air. Some smoke alarms can be temporarily silenced and tested by using a remote control.
- Install photoelectric-type smoke alarms, which are the most reliable for smoldering fires, which often occur in bedrooms or sitting rooms.



HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST



Use this check list as a guide to identify possible fire safety problems in your home. If you check **NO** to any question, the potential hazard should be corrected to reduce your risk and increase your preparedness for a fire.

YES NO

- Do you have at least one operable smoke alarm?
- Do you have at least one operable carbon monoxide alarm?
- Are all electrical cords in good condition (not frayed or cracked)?
- Are all electrical cords in the open, not run under rugs or through doorways?
- Are space heaters placed at least three feet from combustibles?
- Are space heaters plugged directly into wall sockets and not into extension cords?
- Is your apartment door fireproof and self-closing?
- Is your fire escape window clear and unobstructed?
- If you have a security gate, is it FDNY approved?
- Can all windows be opened easily from the inside?
- Are building stairways free of storage and rubbish?
- Are stairway fire doors fireproof, self-closing, and kept closed?
- Are exit lights in the stairway in good working order?
- Do you have operable flashlights handy?
- Do you have a fire escape plan?

Immediately correct problems or hazards that are within your control or responsibility. Notify the building owner of all other problems.

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PRESENTED

BY

The Bloomington Fire Department

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