

HOME HAZARD HUNT

Do you believe that your home is a safe place to be? Statistics show that most fires, accidents, and injuries occur in the home. An important step in family preparedness is the identification of hazards in your home. Once the hazards are identified, it doesn't take much time or effort to make your home a safer place to live.

Getting Started: Using the checklist below, involve the whole family, especially your children, in a home hazard hunt. Remember, anything that can move, break, fall or burn is a potential hazard. Foresight, imagination and common sense are the only tools you will need! After identifying the hazards in your home, make a plan to make your home safer!

Kitchen

Yes/No

- Wear snug-fitting clothes when cooking
- Do not leave cooking food unattended
- Keep pan handles turned in while cooking
- Keep a pan lid nearby in case of fire
- Keep cooking areas clean and clear of combustibles
- Keep cords from dangling
- Ensure outlets near the kitchen sink are GFI (Ground Fault Interrupt) equipped
- Keep sharp knives out of reach of children

Outside

Yes/No

- Clear dry vegetation and rubbish from around the house; clip limbs that overhang the roof
- Use barbecue grills away from buildings and vegetation
- Dispose of barbecue briquettes in a metal container
- Stack firewood away from your house and deck
- Chip and compost your yard debris, or take them to a recycling center instead of burning
- If you must burn, check with the fire department before burning debris or using a burn barrel

All Rooms

Yes/No

- Ensure floor coverings (rugs, carpets) are properly secured to prevent tripping hazards
- Separate draw cords on blinds and drapes to reduce strangulation hazards for kids
- Ensure room exits are unobstructed

Smoking and Matches

Yes/No

- Store matches and lighters out of reach of children
- Use large, deep, non-tip ashtrays
- Never smoke when drowsy or in bed
- Dispose of ashes and cigarette butts in a metal can at least daily
- Check furniture for smoldering cigarettes every night, especially after parties

Electricity

Yes/No

- Avoid the use of extension cords (If used, ensure the correct wattage rating)
- Plug only one heat producing device into an electrical outlet
- Ensure cords are not placed under rugs
- Verify circuits are not overloaded
- Replace damaged cords, plugs, sockets
- Use bulbs with the correct wattage for lamps and fixtures
- Check fuses/circuit breakers for the correct amperage ratings
- Do not override or bypass fuses or circuit breakers

Clothes Washer and Dryer

Yes/No

- Verify that appliances are properly grounded
- Ensure lint filter is clean and serviceable
- Check vent hose and vent line to ensure they are clean and provide unobstructed airflow

Garage/Attic/Shed

Yes/No

- Use gasoline as a motor fuel only and never use or store it inside the home
- Keep only a small quantity of gasoline, if necessary, in an approved container locked in the garage or shed
- Keep flammable liquids such as paints and thinners in their original containers and store on or near the ground and away from sources of heat, sparks, or flame
- Store used oily rags in sealed metal containers
- Never store combustibles such as newspapers and magazines in your attic

Heating Equipment

Yes/No

- Ensure fireplace inserts and gas/wood stoves comply with local codes
- Clean and inspect chimney annually
- Dispose of ashes in metal container
- Keep clothes, furnishings, and electrical cords at least 12" from wall heaters and 36" from portable heaters
- Service furnace annually
- Set water heater thermostat at 120° F
- Elevate new or replacement gas water heaters at least 18" above the floor

Bathrooms

Yes/No

- Store poisonous cleaning supplies and medicines in "child-proofed" cabinets
- Replace glass bottles with plastic containers
- Ensure all outlets are GFI equipped

Family Preparedness

Yes/No

- Plan two unobstructed exits from every room, including the second floor, and make sure everyone knows them
- Designate a meeting place outside
- Have an out-of-state contact for family check after a disaster/emergency

- Develop an escape plan and practice it regularly – both during the day and at night
- Store important papers and valuables in a fire-proof safe or cabinet
- Maintain proper insurance coverage for your home and its contents (earthquake, flood, renters, fire)

Fire Extinguisher

Yes/No

- Verify that an all-purpose fire extinguisher (Class ABC) is maintained in an accessible location
- Ensure that all occupants know how to use it
- Additional fire extinguishers kept in the kitchen, garage, basement, and sleeping area?

Smoke Detector

Yes/No

- Installed properly on every level
- Tested 1st Tuesday of each month
- Battery replaced every six months

Earthquake Hazards (All Rooms)

Yes/No

- Bolt heavy, tall, upright furniture to wall studs
- Lock or remove rollers on beds, furniture and appliances
- Secure hanging plants and light fixtures with one or more guy wires to prevent swinging into walls or windows and breaking
- Locate beds away from windows and heavy wall-mounted objects
- Secure kitchen and bathroom cabinets with “positive” (self-closing) latches
- Secure items on shelves with quake mats, Velcro™, low shelf barrier, etc.
- Store heavy and/or breakable items on lower shelves
- Strap water heater to wall studs
- Use flexible connections on gas appliances
- Check chimney for loose bricks and repair as needed
- Check foundation for cracks and repair as needed
- Bolt home to foundation to prevent shifting during an earthquake
- Secure mirrors and pictures to the wall or hang them with heavy wire, looped through eye screws or tongue-in-groove hangers