

## OCTOBER IS FIRE PREVENTION MONTH

RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY AS FIRE PREVENTION MONTH, October is a great time to review a few simple fire safety measures that can save lives and otherwise protect your home from the unwanted ravages of fire.

Here are 10 simple tips to help you avoid fires and reduce the risk of injury should one occur:

1. **Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms** - Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are the frontline of life-saving fire safety in the home. Install approved smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home and test them monthly.
2. **Create An Escape Route** - Create and practice your escape plan from every room in your home. Practice staying low to the floor and checking for hot doors using the back of your hand. Designate a safe and specific meeting place for all family members to meet outside your home as part of the escape plan. Maintain a clear entry and exit path around the perimeter of your home.
3. **Practice Good Fire Safety in the Kitchen** - Watch what you cook and never leave open flames or hot stove surfaces unattended. Keep pot and pan handles turned inward on stove tops to avoid burn injuries from overturned pots or pans. Keep children away from ovens, stoves, toaster ovens and other hot surfaces.
4. **Prevent Electrical Fires** - Don't overload circuits or extension cords. Cords and wires should never be placed under rugs or in high traffic areas. Avoid loose electrical connections by checking the fit of the plug in the wall outlet. If the plug loosely fits, inspect the outlet right away. A poor connection between the plug and the outlet can cause overheating and can start a fire in minutes. Install safety covers on electrical receptacles in homes with small children.
5. **Keep Electrical Plugs Safe** - Unplug all appliances when not in use. Follow the manufacturer's safety precautions and use your senses to spot any potential hazards. If a plug is overheating, smells strange, shorts out or sparks - the appliance should be shut off immediately and the local fire department should be called to check for extension of any fire or electrical overheat conditions.
6. **Alternate Heaters** - Make sure there is ample space around any portable heating unit. Anything that could catch fire should be at least three feet away. Never use kerosene heaters or other unapproved portable heaters for indoor use.
7. **Position Appliances Carefully** - Try to keep TV sets and appliances away from windows with curtains. If there is a wiring problem, curtains can spread a fire quickly. Additionally, keeping your appliances away from water sources (like rain coming in from windows) can help prevent wiring damage which can lead to a fire.
8. **Clean Dryer Vents** - Clothes dryers often start fires in residential areas. Clean the lint filter every time you start a load of clothes to dry or after the drying cycle is complete. Make sure your exhaust duct is made of metal tubing and not plastic or foil. Clean the exhaust duct with a good quality dryer vent brush to prevent blockage & check for lint build up behind the dryer at least twice a year.
9. **Be Careful Around the Holidays** - Check all your holiday lights prior to stringing them up and dispose of anything with frayed or exposed wires. Keep live Christmas trees watered daily. Replace real candles with electrically powered or battery-operated replicas.
10. **Be Prepared to Evacuate or Shelter in Place:** Have a home emergency preparedness plan and family survival kit to facilitate a safe and effective home evacuation or in the alternative, the need to shelter in place through a major storm, power failure, natural disaster or other large-scale emergency. Keep a helpful eye out for neighbors and other people in need of assistance. Watch out for each other.

For more information or assistance with matters concerning fire safety in the home or workplace, please contact Long Hill Township Fire Official Don Huber at 908-647-8000 ext. 307 or at [fireofficial@longhillnj.gov](mailto:fireofficial@longhillnj.gov)

Please pass this list on to your friends and family and make this Fire Prevention Month count!