

Preventing Fire

Home Fire Protection

Most of the structure fires responded to by the Salisbury Fire-Rescue Department occurs in homes. Most of these fires could have been prevented.

Could your home be part of this year's statistics? To reduce the chances of a fire in your home, check through the following information carefully on a regular basis to keep your home clear of fire hazards.

Home Fire Safety Tips

General Home Safety

- A home fire escape plan should be drawn up with two ways out of each room.
- Practice home fire drills with the family.
- Make sure smoke detectors are properly installed and tested every month.
- Exits should be kept clear of obstacles, especially combustible items.
- Keep a First Aid kit stocked and accessible.
- Make sure electricity, gas, and water shutoff locations and procedures are known.
- House numbers should be visible from the street.
- Water heater temperature should be set no higher than 125 degrees.
- Store all matches and lighters out of the reach of children. If small children are a regular part of your household, lock matches and lighters up, as well.
- Store and use flammable liquids, including gasoline, mineral spirits, lubricants, and nail polish remover properly, away from open flame. Gasoline should never be stored inside your home, and it should never be used for anything except fueling internal combustion engines! Never place combustible material under your home.
- Keep your home and yard tidy and free of debris. Do not allow magazines, newspapers, and other combustible items to collect. Make certain all exits are clear and easy to reach.
- Secure candles in non-combustible holders, away from curtains and other flammable items.
- If smoking is allowed in your home, provide large, deep ashtrays and empty them into metal containers. Check around cushions for smoldering cigarettes before going to bed. **No one** should ever smoke in bed or while drowsy.
- Install a home fire extinguisher.

Living Room/Dining Room

- Make sure electrical cords aren't running under rugs or carpets.
- Keep all electrical appliances, cords, and plugs maintained in good condition.

- Screen or glass panels should be kept in front of all fireplaces.
- Keep your chimney maintained, clean and sound.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.
- Large, deep ashtrays should be kept available if smoking is allowed.
- Keep all combustibles at least three feet away from heaters or heating vents.
- Candles should be secured in non-combustible holders, away from flammable items.

Kitchen

- Maintain your stove and hood to be clear of grease.
- No papers, trash, or dish towels should be placed near burners or ovens.
- Potholders can be kept handy but not close to the stove burners.
- Keep all electrical appliances, cords, and plugs maintained in good condition.
- Pot and pan handles should be turned toward the center of the stove.
- Outlets should not be overloaded.
- Nothing should be stored in the oven, on the oven handle, or on the stove top.

Bathrooms

- Keep all electric appliances away from water.
- Flammable liquids such as aerosols, rubbing alcohol, and nail polish removers should be stored safely.
- Use ground-fault outlets in the bathroom.
- Keep all medication out of the reach of children.
- Discard outdated medication.

Bedrooms

- Smoking should never be done in bed!
- Maintain all electrical items in good condition.
- Electric blankets should be turned off when not in use.
- Close your bedroom door before going to sleep.
- Install smoke detectors in bedrooms.
- Do not leave candles burning.

Garage & Storage Areas

- Gasoline should always be stored in an approved safety can, and no more than one gallon should be stored at any time.
- Keep gasoline and other flammable liquids and aerosols stored away from your water heater or furnace.
- Water heaters and all spark-generating appliances should be kept 18 inches off the garage floor.
- Water heaters should be secured to a wall.
- Used cleaning rags should be stored in tightly-closed metal containers.
- Electrical equipment should be maintained in safe condition.
- Keep clothes dryers and vent hoses free of lint buildup.
- Sawdust and wood scraps should be swept up and thrown away.
- Keep a four foot area clear around electrical panel.

Yard

- Keep your yard free of dry grass, weeds, and debris.
- Propane should be kept in a well-ventilated area.
- Keep a spark arrestor on your chimney.
- Always keep outside grills away from the house.

The result may be that the peaceful rural location you have chosen for your home, surrounded by grass, brush, or trees, could quickly turn into a blazing nightmare.

Urban/Wildland/Beach Fire Safety Checklist

- Flammable vegetation near structures should be removed.
- Prune lower branches from tall trees.
- No branches should be within 10 feet of a chimney.
- Your roof and gutters should be maintained free of debris.
- Areas under balconies and decks should be kept clear.
- A vertical clearance of 14 feet should be maintained for all roads and driveways.
- Your chimney should be covered with a ½-inch mesh screen.
- LPG tanks should be kept away from your house or any combustibles.
- Fire hydrants should be marked and accessible.
- Two emergency exit routes from your house should be identified.
- **Your address should be easily visible from the street.**

- **Keep "9-1-1" posted at each phone.**
- **Keep a storage of emergency supplies.**