

September 29, 2008

Fire Prevention Week – Home Fire Safety

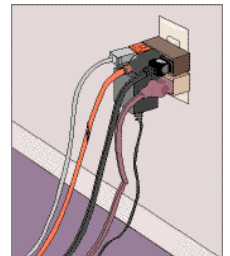
National Fire Prevention Week originated after the Great Chicago Fire, which occurred on October 8, 1871. This tragic incident killed approximately 300 people, left more than 100,000 civilians homeless and destroyed more than 17,000 structures as the fire burned more than 2000 acres in 27 hours. This year Fire Prevention week runs from October 5th to 11th, and the theme is home fire safety. Please see the tips below to ensure that your home is fire safe.

Candles – Ensure that candles have steady holders, are properly extinguished before going to bed. Keep candles at a level so that they are not accessible to children or pets.



Matches – Ensure that matches and lighters are kept away from children. If you have single strike matches (matches that can be ignited off of any hard surface), ensure that they are kept in a locked area.

Electrical – Do not overload electrical outlets or use extension cords in place of permanent wiring. Replace any electrical cords that are cracked or frayed. If you are using an extension cord, do not place them below carpet. Do not leave space heaters unattended, and ensure that they are at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn.



Cooking – Do not leave the stove unattended once it has been turned on. When deep-frying, ensure that the fryer has a thermostat, and do not deep fry in an open pan. Clean grease from burner pans and stove tops regularly and avoid cooking if you are intoxicated.

Housekeeping – Keep flammable materials in approved containers, and away from heat sources. Keep your home clean; remove garbage, paper products, oily rags, and wood shavings regularly. Do not leave combustible materials in attics. Ensure that your furnace is properly maintained, and chimneys are cleaned annually. Ensure that the lint from your dryer is cleaned regularly.



Escape Plan – The Toronto Fire Services website has all the tools for homeowners to create home escape plans. They are very important, especially if there are children in your home. If you are in a high-rise building ensure that you know the procedures to be taken from the fire safety plan.

Does your house have life saving equipment?

Carbon Monoxide Detectors – Carbon Monoxide poisoning is the number one cause of fire related deaths. Install carbon monoxide detectors near all sleeping areas.

Smoke Alarms - Working smoke alarms will provide the early warning you will need to escape a fire. Install them and make sure the batteries are replaced at least once a year *It is advised to change the batteries at daylight savings time. Test Smoke alarms monthly and replace them after 10 years. It is the law to have working smoke alarms in all levels of your home.

Escape Ladders – If stairs are blocked by fire, escape ladders are a great way to have an additional way to escape.

Fire Extinguishers – Fire Extinguishers should be Located in the Kitchen, Basement and Garage. Types of extinguishers are as follows;

- i. **Class A** (Ordinary Combustible Materials) – Water Based Extinguishers
- ii. **Class B and C** (Flammable Liquids, and Energized Electrical Equipment) – Carbon Dioxide Extinguishers
- iii. **Class ABC** – Dry Chemical Fire Extinguishers

To properly operate a fire extinguisher, remember PASS.

P- Pull the Pin

A- Aim at the base of the fire

S- Squeeze the handle

S- Sweep slowly across the base of the fire

Have a safe fire prevention week!

Julie Ineson

