



Heating and Electricity

Electrical problems cause tens of thousands of fires in U.S. homes every year. December is the most dangerous month for electrical fires. People spend a lot of time inside then. Use of lighting, heating, and appliances increases.

Old cords and faulty outlets are common sources of trouble. Never use frayed plugs or wires. Replace all worn, old, or damaged cords right away.

Use extension cords wisely. They are for temporary use only. Don't overload circuits. And don't run cords under rugs or trap them against walls. Heat can build up.

In colder months, space heaters can provide extra warmth. But they also pose a fire threat. Take special care when using all heating equipment, fireplaces, and wood stoves.

Buy electric heaters only if they have a UL safety label. The UL mark means the device meets strict safety testing standards.

If you buy a kerosene heater, use only



approved fuel. Use K-1 kerosene. Never use other fuels, such as gasoline or camp stove fuel. Re-fuel outside, and only when the heater is cool.

Be sure the heater has a thermostat. It will keep the heater from getting too hot. Make sure the heater will turn itself off if it tips over.

Keep space heaters at least three feet away from things that can burn. Those include curtains, bedding, furniture, paper, and clothes.

Turn heaters off before leaving a room or going to bed. Always unplug them when they're not in use.

Watch children and pets at all times when a space heater is on. Never let kids play with or near a space heater. Teach them it's not a toy.

A space heater isn't a dryer or a table, either. So never dry clothes with a space heater. Don't place or store objects near or on top of one.

Candles

Candles help set a festive mood. They add beauty and warmth to any special event. But candles can cause tragedies if they aren't used properly.

Fires started by candles are a growing problem. The tips here will help you use and enjoy candles safely:

- Blow out all candles before leaving a room or going to sleep.
- Don't let kids keep candles or incense in their rooms. Candles should only be used when an adult is present and awake.
- Put candles in stable holders made of metal, glass, or other materials that won't burn. Don't set them where they'll be knocked down or blown over.
- Keep candles at least three feet away from anything that can burn. That includes curtains, tablecloths, and papers.
- Keep candles away from pets and children.
- Never use candles during a power outage. Use flashlights instead.
- Keep safety in mind at holiday time. Never place candles on live trees or other evergreens. Keep them away from wrapping paper, gifts, and decorations.



Smoking

Smoking cigarettes is a health risk for many reasons. One is that smoking materials can set off deadly fires.

Careless smoking is a major cause of fire deaths. To reduce this risk, smokers should:

- put out a cigarette the moment they feel drowsy.
- never smoke in bed.
- use sturdy ashtrays on flat surfaces.
- never walk away from lit cigarettes,

cigars, and pipes.

- pour water on cigarette butts or matches before throwing them into the trash. A person can also empty ashtrays into an airtight metal container. Warm ashes dumped into trash cans can smolder for hours and then ignite.
- keep matches, lighters, and cigarettes locked up and away from children.
- have a smoking area outside the home.



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