Home Fire Safety Checklist

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If the answer to the question is true for your home, check "Yes". " “Yes" shows that good safety practices are in place. If the answer to the question is not true for your home, check “No”. "No" shows an opportunity to improve home safety applies to this topic. If the question does not apply to your home, check “NA” for “Not Applicable”.			
Matches and Lighters and Smoking	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Are matches and lighters kept where young children cannot reach them?			
Are strike-anywhere matches kept in a glass container with a metal lid?			
A glass container will protect the matches from moisture and will prevent them from catching fire in an accident. A plastic lid may melt with heat; a metal lid will not.			
Are matches and lighters kept away from heat sources like stoves and heaters?			
Are matches and smoking materials out and cold before they are discarded?			
Do smokers use safety ashtrays?			
Is “no smoking in bed” a house rule?			
Does a responsible person watch the children when parents go out, even for a little while?			
Children can be curious about fire. If they are unsupervised and begin to play with smoking materials, fires and burns can result.			
Smoke Alarms	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Are the smoke alarms in your home installed according to manufacturer's recommendations?			
Smoke alarms are often mounted on or near the ceiling where heat and smoke will rise in a fire so that the heat and/or smoke sensors in the device will activate early. Installation according to the manufacturer's recommendations is best.			
Are smoke alarms installed in all sleeping areas of your home and in common areas like hallways on every level?			
Are smoke alarms tested at least once each month or according to manufacturer’s recommendations?			
If a smoke alarm fails to operate when tested, is it tested with new batteries and/or replaced immediately?			
If your smoke alarms do not have tamper-proof, non-removable batteries, do you change the batteries in your smoke alarms at least once a year, on a birthday or holiday, or when you set your set your clocks forward in the spring or back in the fall?			

Note that the battery cannot be replaced in an alarm powered by a10-year lithium or "long-life" battery.			
Are your home's smoke alarms less than 10 years old?			
Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years to be assured of reliable function.			
Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarms	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Are the CO alarms in your home installed according to manufacturer's recommendations?			
CO gas has the same density as air, so it readily mixes with all the air in a room. Depending on the manufacturer's testing, they may recommend mounting a CO alarm in locations other than on or near the ceiling. Installation according to the manufacturer's recommendations is best.			
Are CO alarms installed in all sleeping areas and on every level of your home?			
Are CO alarms tested at least once each month or according to manufacturer's recommendations?			
If a CO alarm fails to operate when tested, is it tested with new batteries and/or replaced immediately?			
If your CO alarms do not have tamper-proof, non-removable batteries, do you change the batteries in your CO alarms at least once a year, on a birthday or holiday, or when you set your set your clocks forward in the spring or back in the fall?			
Note that the battery cannot be replaced in an alarm powered by a lithium or "long-life" battery.			
Are your home's CO alarms less than 5 years old?			
CO alarms should be replaced every 5 years to be assured of reliable function.			
Electrical Hazards	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Are only qualified electricians allowed to install or extend wiring in your home?			
When you buy electrical equipment, such as extension cords, appliances, televisions, and other devices, do you make sure that it has been approved by a facility like Underwriters Laboratories?			
Are there enough electrical outlets in each room to avoid the need for multiple attachment plugs and long extension cords?			
Are there special circuits for heavy-duty appliances like stoves, air conditioners, and clothes dryers?			

On the household-lighting circuit, are the proper fuses or circuit-breakers used?			
Are all extension cords in the open and not running under rugs, over hooks, or through partitions or door openings?			
Extension cords under rugs, over hooks, and through door openings are subject to abrasion and wear. If the insulation on the cord cracks or wears through, a dangerous potential for electrical shock or a fire can occur.			
Storage	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Are your basement, closets, balcony, and attic kept free of rubbish, crumbling boxes, and large stacks of paper?			
Paper, boxes, and old clothes can serve as fuel for a fire.			
Are all boxes, containers, shelved and hanging items in storage kept in an orderly fashion?			
Unlabeled and jumbled items increase the potential for loss with a fire. Disordered collections may inadvertently obscure potential fuel sources of old papers, clothes, and wooden items.			
Flammable Liquids	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
If you store paint, varnish, or other flammable liquids, are the containers metal, tightly closed, and kept away from heat in a metal cabinet in the garage or in an outbuilding?			
After oily polishing rags are used, are they destroyed or placed in covered metal cans in a metal cabinet in the garage?			
If you launder oily cloths from the kitchen or from a garage or shop, do you dry them outside?			
Oily rags or clothes should not be laundered, then dried in a dryer. Oil residues staying in the clothes after washing will release ignitable vapors when they are dried in a dryer. Dryer fires have occurred in this situation. Drying these clothes outside is safer.			
If you keep gasoline for use in a power mower or outboard motor, is it stored in an approved, capped container away from heat?			
Does everyone in the family know to never to use gasoline, paint thinner, or other flammable liquids to clean clothes, furnishings, or floors?			
Central Heating			
If your heating system burns oil, is the equipment listed by Underwriters Laboratories (UL)?			
If your heating system burns natural gas or propane, is the equipment listed by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or the American Gas Association Laboratories?			

If your heating system burns oil or natural gas or propane or coal or wood, are furnaces, chimneys, exhaust vents, and other flue connections it regularly checked and serviced by a qualified technician before each heating season?			
If your heating system burns coal or wood, are ashes put in metal containers, clear of wood floors or partitions and removed to the outside?			
Are walls, ceilings, and partitions near heating equipment either adequately separated from the sources of heat or protected by noncombustible materials?			
Space Heating	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Are wood floors under space heaters protected by insulation or ventilated air space?			
Have all space heaters been tested and listed by a recognized testing authority like Underwriters Laboratories?			
Are curtains arranged so they do not blow over space heaters?			
Are space heaters always turned off before everyone goes to bed?			
Do all space heaters sit level and out of the way of traffic?			
Are fuel-burning heaters, which use up oxygen as they burn, properly vented?			
Do you always keep a door or window slightly open in any room where a fuel-burning heater are used?			
Are the fuel tanks of portable heaters refilled only by adults outdoors?			
Are the gas connections for space heaters or other natural gas or propane appliances made of approved flexible materials?			
Flexible gas connections allow the appliance, like a clothes dryer, to be moved away from the wall for servicing or cleaning without cumbersome disconnections and reconnections with rigid metal pipe fittings.			
Wood Stoves and Fireplaces	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Does your family avoid burning unseasoned wood or evergreen wood in your wood stove or fireplace?			
Green wood contains lots of water and burns with more smoke and less heat than dry (aka seasoned) wood. The water vapor mixes with other gases and particles to create creosote in the chimney. Creosote is a flammable, tar-like substance that can ignite and cause a chimney fire. It can take 6–12 months to dry firewood to an ideal moisture content of 15 to 20%. Stacking patterns, summer sun exposure, weather, and the wood species all affect drying time.			
Are wood stove and fireplace chimneys inspected and cleaned once each year?			
Creosote buildup or a bird's nest stuck in a chimney can lead to a chimney fire that can lead to chimney damage or a home fire.			

Does someone open the chimney flue and check airflow before using the fireplace?			
Opening the flue, whether the fireplace fuel is wood or gas, is important for ventilation of smoke and carbon monoxide to the outdoors. A fireplace has a damper like a door in the chimney to block airflow into and out of the house when there is no fire in the fireplace. Some dampers are in the throat of the chimney near the firebox and are controlled by a lever or rod or a turnscrew. Other dampers are located at the top of the chimney and are controlled by a long chain extended to a hook near the firebox. After opening the damper to prepare for a fire, check the airflow by holding a lit match or piece of paper in the firebox below the damper. If the smoke rises quickly, the flue is open. If the smoke lingers, the flue may not be open or there may be a blockage. Make sure that the flue is open before starting any fire in the firebox.			
Does everyone in the family know never to use any flammable liquids or kerosene to start a fire in a wood stove or fireplace?			
Is every indoor wood stove or fireplace equipped with a proper door or metal fire screen or glass enclosure?			
Sparks from a fireplace can readily ignite and melt holes in rugs, upholstery, curtains, and clothes. Fireplace screens or enclosures must fit closely to stop flying sparks.			
Are fireplace and wood stove fires extinguished before everyone retires to bed or leaves home?			
Going to bed or leaving home leaves a fireplace or wood stove fire unattended for hours. A fire or glowing embers, even if enclosed, is a potential hazard for a house fire or from vented gases like carbon monoxide. So, before you go to bed or leave the house, always fully extinguish the fire first, just as if you were managing a campfire.			
Cooking in the Kitchen	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Are walls, ceilings, and partitions near cooking equipment either adequately separated from the sources of heat or protected by noncombustible materials?			
Are curtains arranged so they do not blow over stoves?			
Is the kitchen stove, including the oven and broiler, kept clean of grease?			
Is the kitchen exhaust fan regularly cleaned to prevent build-up of grease?			
Are the shutoff valves for natural gas and propane appliances located on the rigid metal gas pipeline where they can be reached in case of trouble without touching the appliance?			
Are aerosol cans of cleaning and cooking products always placed and stored away from heat and flames?			

Aerosol cans may hold combustible active ingredients like cooking oil and flammable propellants under pressure. With exposure to heat, the can may rupture, releasing a cloud of burnable mist that can explode into flame if the mist contacts a spark or flame. The can itself becomes a missile as it ruptures.			
Cooking Outside	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Are charcoal grills used only outdoors and ignited without the use of liquid fuels?			
Is a charcoal chimney available for igniting the charcoal safely without lighter fluid?			
For cooking on a natural gas or propane grill, is a butane lighter with a long nozzle or a piezoelectric starter or a long stem match holder available to use for increased safety compared to standard matches?			
Have you read the owner's manual or watched product videos for your particular grill?			
Is your grill placed away from structures, such as a porch, balcony, terrace, courtyard, and patio?			
Is your grill placed at least 10 feet away from flammable structures, such as a tree, fence, or building?			
If your family cooks food by deep frying, do you follow guidelines for safe cooking in large pots of oil?			
Yard Hazards			
Do you keep your yard cleared of fallen leaves, lawn, shrubbery, and garden trimmings, and fallen limbs?			
Clearing a perimeter around a home of organic combustible materials can help to protect it from the spread of an adjacent wildland fire.			
In areas where burning trash is permitted, are trash and refuse burned only in suitable outdoor incinerators and on sufficiently calm days?			
Backyard burning refers to a resident burning household trash on their own property. Although this has been a common method of disposing of packaging, food scraps, and yard debris for decades, this practice is now known to be dangerous to human health and to the environment because combustion releases toxic chemicals, particles, and gases into the air. Many state, local, and tribal governments have enacted laws or ordinances banning or limiting backyard burning.			
Burning trash is a known cause of wildland fires. If you burn trash, the fire should be observed until is out and cold. A shovel, a rake, and a fire bucket filled with water should be handy. A garden hose with adequate length and water pressure should be connected and ready for use.			

Is an adult always present when trash or leaves are burned outdoors?			
Holiday Hazards	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Do you have a safe Fourth of July celebration by not using fireworks?			
In buying gift toys, do you insist on those that cannot cause fire, shock, or explosion?			
Is the holiday tree kept outside with the base in water until you are ready to set it up?			
Is the base of the tree kept inside with the base in water and removed when the needles begin to fall?			
Is there a switch away from the tree for turning the lights on and off?			
Are tree lights shut off whenever you leave home or go to bed?			
Is all decorative lighting checked for frayed or brittle cords and loose sockets?			
Are all decorating materials noncombustible?			
Are gift wrappings gathered up and disposed of promptly after gifts are opened?			
Burning household trash is illegal in many states because it contributes to air pollution. Burning packaging materials and gift wrapping may contaminate wood ashes with plastic residues, heavy metals, and other toxic compounds that otherwise would be safe to add to a garden as fertilizer or to a compost pile.			
Candles	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Are candles placed in stable holders away from children and curtains and flammable decorations such as dried flowers and wreaths?			
Estimates vary but candles cause 10,000 home fires, hundreds of deaths, thousands of injuries, and millions of dollars of property damage each year. To prevent candle fires, you can: ● Trim the wick to ¼ inch before lighting because trimming a wick helps o Candles burn more cleanly and produce less smoke and soot. Soot buildup can stain the candle's container and nearby surfaces. o Candles burn up to 50% longer. Longer wicks burn faster and can create uneven melting, which wastes wax and shortens the candle's life. o Candles burn with a brighter, clearer flame. Untrimmed wicks can produce dull flames. o Candles burn more evenly. Long wicks can create "burn pools" and uneven melting. o To prevent the flame from getting too big, which can be a fire hazard. A flame that's taller than 1 inch can increase the risk of fire. o To disperse the scent more effectively.			

● Use a sturdy, heat-resistant candleholder big enough for drips and melted wax ● Keep candles away from children and pets ● Do not leave candles burning unattended. ● Use flameless candles, that is, tiny LED bulbs engineered to flicker like a flame, powered by a battery, sometimes with an Edison screw base.			
Are candles carefully extinguished after use, before bedtime, before leaving a room, and before leaving home?			
Extinguish candles before leaving a room or going to bed. A candle flame burns at 1,800–2,550 ° (1,000–1,400 °C. Pinching a candle flame will snuff it out but risks burning your fingers, even if they are wet. Using a candle snuffer or a wick dipper is safe and effective and does not risk blowing hot melted wax droplets or smoke onto nearby surfaces. You can use a pencil point as a wick dipper to push the wick into the pool of melted wax at its base to smother the flame. Holding a finger an inch or two from the candle flame as you blow a small puff of air at your finger and the flame beyond it uses the principle of vortex shedding so the air flow will both cool the flame and remove its gaseous wax fuel.			
A Prepared Family	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Does every family member know where your home fire extinguishers are and how to use them?			
Do family members close inside doors in your home before they go to sleep at night?			
If your garage attaches to your house or in the basement, is it separated from the living area by walls of non-combustible plaster or drywall and a tight-fitting door?			
If a fire begins in the basement at night, non-combustible walls and tightly closed doors can delay the spread of heat, smoke, toxic gases, and flames to sleeping areas, allowing time for sleepers to awaken and escape.			
Does every family member know the proper procedure for reporting a fire in your community, including calling 911 or other emergency telephone number, and the location of the neighborhood fire-alarm box?			
Does every family member know what to do and what not to do in case they smell smoke or natural gas or propane?			
Does every family member know how to call the fire department?			
Does every member of the family know the address of your home?			
Are babysitters carefully instructed on what to do in case of fire or another emergency?			
Does your family regularly practice “Exit Drills In The Home” (E.D.I.T.H.)?			

Does everyone taking part in the exit drills know where to safely assemble after exiting the home during a drill or an actual emergency for accountability purposes?			
When the smoke or CO alarm sounds, does everyone know to get out of the house at once?			
The sounding of a smoke or of a CO alarm should prompt everyone to follow the Family Home Evacuation Plan at once, leaving possessions and pets behind.			
Did the entire family take part in completing this checklist?			