



## **FIRE PREVENTION**

*The following are some precautions that can reduce the threat of fire in your home as well as what to do in case of a fire. Be sure to post the ABCs of fire safety where all members of your household can refer to it easily.*



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## KNOW THE FIRE EXTINGUISHER PASSWORD

PULL the pin

AIM low

SQUEEZE the handle

SWEEP from side to side, keeping the extinguisher aimed at the base of the fire.

## LEARN THE ABCS OF YOUR FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Fire extinguishers can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until firefighters arrive. Before you begin to fight a small fire, make sure that everyone is leaving the building and that the fire department has been called. If your escape route could be blocked, get out!

Your fire extinguisher must fit the fire:

A

"A" is for ordinary combustibles such as wood, paper and plastic.

B

"B" is for flammable liquids like gasoline, grease, oil paint, and flammable gas.

C

"C" is for live electrical wiring and devices.

## **FIRE PREVENTION - HOW FIRE CONSCIOUS ARE YOU?**

Chances are that your "Home Sweet Home" could be a lot safer. Among the major causes of fatal fires in Canada are:

- failure of electrical and mechanical equipment
- careless handling of flammable material
- heating and cooking appliances
- careless smoking

### **Electrical and Mechanical Equipment**

- If a circuit breaker trips or a fuse blows, it's always sensible to find out why. Don't use a fuse or breaker rated at more than the capacity of the circuit.
- Use extension cords only temporarily and with care. Remember that voltage drops over distance and can cause some appliances to overheat. Never run electrical cords under carpets or hang them from nails.
- Remember that peak loads are handled best by balanced circuits. A 100-amp service with 20 circuits is often better than a 200-amp service with only 10 circuits. If in doubt, consult a licensed electrician.
- Look for a recognized seal of approval on electrical appliances and cords (usually CSA or UL).
- Be extremely cautious with aluminum wiring, particularly at terminals and junctions and in combination with copper wire. When corroded aluminum resists electrical current, it can get very hot. Aluminum wire tends to "flow" under compression, causing terminal screws to loosen and current to spark like a welding machine.
- Remember that even a fuse of correct amperage will not prevent sparks from frayed wires from causing fires.
- Look out for thermostats serving electrical heaters and appliances; these can sometimes weld themselves shut, even in the "off" position.
- Keep insulation and combustible material well away from recessed ceiling "pot lights". Even approved lights can cause problems. Don't exceed the maximum bulb wattage specified by the maker of any lighting equipment.
- Telephone service wires, along with television and other outdoor aerials should be grounded. Use lightning arresters in exposed locations.
- Don't risk a grass fire; make sure your gas mower's muffler or spark arrestor is in good working order. On electrical mowers, ensure that your cord is in good shape and use only on a ground fault receptacle.

### **Fuels, Solvents and Other Flammable Materials**

- Fuels and solvents should be stored in approved, correctly marked containers. Gasoline, in particular, should be stored in a container that will tolerate pressure of expansion as temperatures change.
- Don't tempt arsonists by leaving fuels and solvents in plain view.
- Be particularly wary of pilot lights that can ignite paint or solvent fumes.
- Oily rags can ignite spontaneously. If you must keep them, store them in a small, sealed metal container. Even lanolin-based hand cleaner can cause cloths to ignite.

## **Fuels, Solvents and Other Flammable Materials Continued**

- Never use gasoline as a solvent. Even the friction of a cloth can ignite it.
- Never use gasoline as a fire starter.
- Don't use a naked flame instead of a flashlight, especially anywhere that dust or vapor could ignite.
- Use a heat-sink or shield when soldering plumbing close to combustible surfaces.
- If you must use a propane tank indoors, use nothing larger than 400 grams. Remember that propane is heavier than air and can accumulate in floor drains and other low-lying areas. Never use propane or other compressed fuel without a regulator. Don't park a propane-powered vehicle in an underground garage.
- Do not put foam-rubber articles in clothes dryers.
- Treat hair spray, nail polish and remover, with respect; they contain a high proportion of solvent. These products and smoking don't mix.

## **Heating and Cooking**

- Guard open fires carefully; fire screens are advisable. Dispose of hot ashes safely.
- Never try to get more heat out of an appliance than it was designed to provide. Establish and stick to regular maintenance schedules.
- Beware of blocked chimneys. Ensure that all chimneys that are in use conform to existing building codes. Cap unused flue holes with metal or concrete.
- Chimneys used with oil or solid fuels should be cleaned frequently.
- Respect specified clearances between heating appliances and combustible walls and floors; older appliances in particular must often be mounted on a base of insulated metal, concrete or other incombustible material.
- If a fire starts in a conventional oven or microwave, close the door and starve it of oxygen.
- When deep-fat frying, use only an electric appliance that is thermostatically controlled.
- Clean stove-hood filters, vents and grease-traps frequently.
- Smother grease fires with a tight lid or cover; you can throw baking soda or salt on a grease fire, but never water, which tends to spread flames.
- Never throw flour or uncooked cereal on a fire.
- Don't store flammable liquids above a stove or furnace.
- Make sure that curtains and towels cannot blow into gas flames or over a hot stove
- Don't use an outdoor-style barbecue indoors. Keep barbecues well away from walls of buildings and over-hanging roofs.

## **Careless Smoking**

- Keep your matches and lighters out of reach of children. Store matches in fire-resistant containers. Beware of butane lighters, especially those without safety valves; they explode easily.
- Provide smokers with plenty of deep ashtrays.
- Don't smoke while refueling vehicles or equipment or near solvents and paints.
- Never smoke in bed.

## **More Fire-Safety Tips**

- Remember that even mothball fumes are flammable and know that alcohol burns without visible flame.
- Clear away rubbish; don't give fire a place to start.
- Keep discarded bottles out of sunlight; they can act as heat-concentrating lenses and start a fire.
- Never leave a Christmas tree or holiday decorative lights unattended.
- Unplug "instant-on" televisions that are unused for long periods.
- When draft-proofing a home, make sure that fuel-burning appliances have enough air to "breathe".
- Make sure that babysitters know the escape exits and the basic rules of fire prevention.
- Dust can explode. Vacuum cleaner dust and floor sweepings should be wrapped and discarded with household garbage.
- Never leave small children at home alone. Kids like to experiment with fire.
- Be aware that direct sun can char internal wood surfaces of outer walls; consider vines, vents and other methods of cooling.
- Never make major structural changes without a building permit; fire safety is a major concern of building inspectors.
- Partitions between attached garage and house should be fire-resistive and the door self-closing and the lintel raised above the floor. Never block this door open.

## **Apartments and Fire**

There are some special fire-protection dos and don'ts in apartment buildings. All tenants have a duty to keep stairways clear and emergency exits unblocked. Never use an elevator during a fire; the elevator shafts can become full of hot gasses, like chimney flues - and the elevator controls can quit or malfunction. Or the doors could open onto a hall full of flame and smoke.

Know where the fire alarms are and learn the locations of fire extinguishers and hoses. Never toss a lighted cigarette from a balcony; it could blow in an open window below. And never barbecue on a balcony; it's too dangerous.

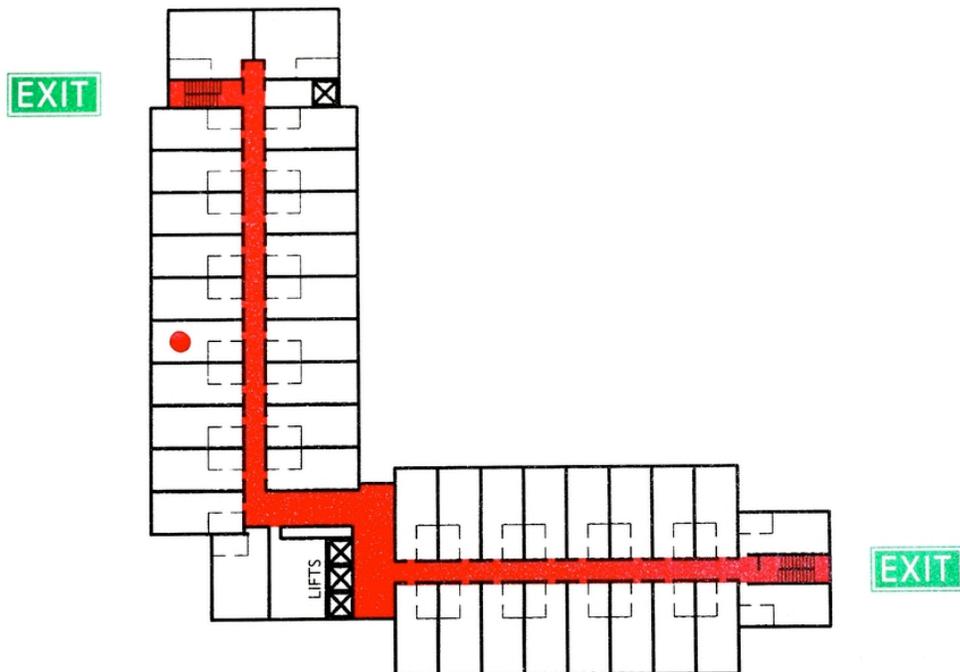
If there's a fire, feel the hall door before opening it; if it's hot, leave it shut. If smoke is entering under the door, plug the gap with wet towels. And remember, because smoke usually rises, it may be easier to breathe at floor level, at an open window, or out on a balcony. If you do leave the apartment, be sure to close the door behind you, and leave windows closed, too.

## Plan Your Exit

Make an escape plan. Practice fire drills. Every member of your household - babysitters, too - should know the exits and how to use them. Remember, keys to double-cylinder door locks should be easily reached. Learn your fire-emergency telephone number; write it down near the telephone and, if your telephone is programmable, why not include 911 or your fire department? Give your fire department early warning! A small blaze can become a major fire in minutes. If seniors are often home alone, urge them to consider subscribing to an emergency alarm service.

## Maintain Smoke Alarms

Smoke detectors save lives; but a smoke alarm with a dead or missing battery, or one that is wired to a switched circuit, is worse than none at all - it builds a false sense of security. Smoke detectors should be installed outside bedrooms and on each additional level of the home, including the basement. Keep smoke detectors clear of dust, and never paint them. Don't use rechargeable batteries; they can quit without warning!



# IN CASE OF A FIRE

## Get out! Stay out!

- If you smell smoke or see flames, get everyone out of the building immediately
- During a fire, the air is cleaner near the floor
- Get down on your knees and crawl to an exit
- Close doors to slow the spread of smoke and flame
- Agree on a meeting place; go there and "take attendance" to be sure that no one is left inside the building

## Call the Fire Department

- Phone the Fire Department and give the complete address of the fire
- Don't hang up until you're told to
- Be sure that no one goes back inside the building for any reason
- Tell the Fire Department if anyone is trapped inside the building

## Don't Fight Fire

- unless someone has called the Fire Department
- unless you still have a clear exit
- unless you have the right tools and know exactly what to do

*Remember, things can be replaced, but you cannot*

## Break the Fire Triangle

Most fires need heat, oxygen, and fuel. Break the triangle at any point and you'll extinguish the fire.

- (1) Cooling removes heat
- (2) Smothering removes oxygen
- (3) Relocating combustible material removes fuel

## If Your Clothes Catch Fire

- Stop where you are; don't fan the flames by running
- Drop to the ground
- Roll over and over - in a rug, blanket or coat - to smother the flames. Protect your face with your hands or a damp cloth

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