

# FIRE SAFETY TIPS FROM THE NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION AGENCY



Chances are that **fire safety** isn't on the top of your priority list as a homeowner. However, home fires are more common than most people realize. Plus, what may start as a small fire can get out of hand quickly causing expensive repairs, injuries and even death. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), fire fighters in the United States responded to an estimated average of 358,500 home structure fires per year from 2011 to 2015. So, what can you do to ensure your safety as well as the safety of your community neighbors? Please take the time to go over these 7 very important fire safety tips.

1. **Make a household plan.**

You should have a fire escape plan for everyone in their condo – including pets. You should review the plan and practice your escape procedures together to ensure that everyone knows what to do and where to go in case of a fire.

2. **Prep your pet.**

Pet owners should always make sure that Fido or Fluffy is collared and tagged. Microchipping is a good idea, too. Keep a leash or crate near escape route exits.

3. **Install smoke/CO detectors – and check them regularly.**

Most home fire deaths happen when people are asleep, so it's critical that you have working smoke detectors in your condo to provide an early warning. The NFPA estimates that a working smoke alarm in the bedroom cuts the risk of dying in a fire by half. Residents should install smoke detectors in every bedroom, outside every sleeping area and on every level of their condo, including the basement. Be sure to test the batteries twice a year. A good way to remember is to do it when clocks are reset in the spring and fall. For even more protection, Clearview Heights has combination fire carbon monoxide detectors. They can alert you to the presence of carbon monoxide gas. Because carbon monoxide is odorless and colorless, it is often referred to as a "silent killer."

4. **Complete your fire safety equipment list.**

Although exiting your condo during a fire should always be your first priority, small, contained fires (such as one in a wastebasket or a small kitchen fire) can be eliminated with a home fire extinguisher. Residents should **only** attempt to put out a fire after everyone else has exited the condo and the fire department has been called. Every resident should have a multipurpose extinguisher on hand that isn't too big to handle. Follow instructions on proper use and always keep your back to an exit to ensure you have a way to escape. If the room has filled with smoke, you should exit immediately.

5. **DO watch those pots.**

Kitchen fires usually happen when residents forget that they have something on the stove. Stray crumbs or food that boils over can ignite a fire and spell disaster if no one is there to take quick action. Once ignited, kitchen fires spread quickly.

6. **Unplug appliances when not in use.**

Be sure to unplug heating elements like curling irons and straighteners before dashing out the door. These appliances can reach temperatures of 450 degrees or more and can cause a fire if they come in contact with flammable items. Even malfunctioning kitchen appliances like toasters and toaster ovens have been known to cause fires, so the safest bet is to unplug them when not in use.

7. **Be especially vigilant around holidays.**

Holidays are often a time of lighting candles, putting up lights and spending additional time in the kitchen. Help ensure that your holidays don't turn into bad memories with these holiday-specific recommendations:

- Be sure last year's lights – including electrical cords – are in good working order before plugging them in, and always shut them off before going to bed.
- Opt for battery-powered candles instead of real, wax candles.
- Keep all paper and plastic decor away from sources of heat or flame – and always out of reach of children and pets.
- Use extra caution in the kitchen, particularly when cooking multiple items.
- Look for décor that is flame resistant or flame retardant.
- If you put up a natural Christmas tree, keep it at least three feet away from any heat source and away from exits.

Becoming more safety savvy doesn't take a lot of time or money, but the cost of not taking fire safety seriously can be very high. For even more comprehensive fire safety tips, information and resources, visit the [National Fire Protection Agency](#) or the [Red Cross](#) website.