



Contact: City of Wayne Fire Department for more information, 734-722-1111

Identifying Fire Hazards in Your Home How Fire-Safe is *Your* Home?

Fire Hazards

Check for fire Hazards in your home. Correct any problems **NOW**.

Kitchen

- Matches stored out of reach of children.
- No overloaded outlets or extension cords.
- No curtains or towel racks close to the range.
- Flammable liquids (cleaning fluids, contact adhesives, etc.) or aerosols stored away from the range or other heat sources. (Remember, even a pilot light can set vapors on fire.)
- No attractive or frequently used items stored above the range where someone could get burned reaching for them (especially small children in search of cookies or other goodies).
- No worn or frayed appliance or extension cords.

Living Room, Family Room, Den, Bedrooms

- Matches and lighters stored out of the reach of children.
- Use only large ashtrays (small ashtrays are too dangerous). Empty ashtrays frequently and in non-combustible containers (when all signs of heat and burning are gone). Take extra care when ever smoking materials are used.
- Fireplace should be kept screened and cleaned regularly.
- Replace worn or frayed extension cords or other electrical cords.
- No extension cords under rugs or carpets or looped over nails or other sharp objects that could cause them to fray. No extension cord should be used as permanent wiring, only meant for temporary use.
- Heating equipment kept three feet away from all curtains, furniture, and papers.
- No overloaded outlets or extension cords.

Basement, Garage, Storage Areas

- No newspapers or other rubbish stored near furnace, water heater or other heat sources.
- No oily, greasy rags stored, except in approved, labeled, sealed, non-glass containers. (Preferably metal).
- No gasoline stored in the house or basement. It should be stored away from the house in an outbuilding and only in safety cans that have flame arresters and pressure-relief valves.
- No flammable liquids stored near workbenches or pilot lights or in anything other than labeled, sealed metal containers. (This includes varnish, paint remover, paint thinner, contact adhesives, cleaning fluids, etc.)
- No overloaded outlets or extension cords. Extension cords can be used as temporary wiring, but must be replaced with permanent wiring as soon as possible.
- All fuses of the correct size.

Dangerous Actions

- Do you allow unsafe habits? These guidelines may help your family become more safety conscious.
- Wear close fitting sleeves while cooking. (No loose sleeves, shirts, blouses or skirts that may catch fire).
- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Never play with matches or lighters.
- Never use gasoline to start a fire in a grill.
- Never add lighter fluid to an already started fire in a grill.
- Never use gasoline as a cleaning agent.
- No smoking in bed, or in a chair or on the sofa when tired, drinking or taking medication.
- Never spray aerosols while smoking or near a space heater, range, open flames or other ignition sources.
- No smoking while using cleaning fluid, paint thinner or other flammable liquids.
- Never use a cigarette lighter after spilling flammable fluid on your hands or clothing.
- Never reach over a range or climb onto a range to get something stored above it.
- Never lean against a range for warmth or stand too close to a heater or fireplace.
- Never give a small child the impression a match is a toy. Never let them blow matches out or play with them.
- Never use a lighted match, lighter or candle to illuminate a dark area, such as a closet.

Safety Measures

Do you have these safety items in your home?

- Working smoke detectors on all levels and outside sleeping areas (each story or wing, basement, etc.). Have you tested the detector in the last month? Have you changed the batteries within the last year?
- ABC fire extinguisher in the kitchen and/or workshop?
- Emergency exit plan with two ways out from each room and a meeting place outdoors?

Using Your Fire Extinguisher

Before using a Fire Extinguisher....

- Be sure that the fire department has been called. Call 911 for all emergencies.
- Tell someone of your intentions to fight the fire, and have them tell the fire department when they arrive.
- Be certain to keep clear path to an exit and an exit to your back at all times.

Understand the different classes of fires

There are three basic classes of fires. All fire extinguishers are labeled using standard symbols for the classes of fire they can put out. A red slash through any of the symbols tells you that the extinguisher cannot be used on that class of fire. A missing lettered symbol tells you that the extinguisher has not been rated for that given class of fire.

- **Class A** Ordinary combustibles such as wood, cloth, paper, rubber and many plastics.
- **Class B** Flammable liquids such as oil, gasoline, grease, tar, lacquers and thinners.
- **Class C** Energized electrical equipment including wiring, fuse boxes, machines and appliances that are plugged in.
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Fire extinguishers should be installed in plain view near escape routes and away from potential fire hazards. Feel free to ask the Wayne Fire Department personnel for advice on the best locations.

Fighting the Fire

- P** - Pull the pin or latch
- A** - Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire
- S** - Squeeze the handle
- S** - Sweep the nozzle from side to side at the base of the fire

Knowing how to use a fire extinguisher is only one aspect of good fire safety. Other key elements are:

- Properly installing and maintaining smoke detectors.
- Having an escape plan and practicing it regularly.
- Keeping your property as fire-safe as possible, both indoors and out.

After the Fire - The First 24 Hours

The fire is out. It remains a typical time of your being emotionally devastated and overwhelmed by circumstances. However, it is our desire to assist you in addressing a number of remaining issues.

Securing Valuables

It is acceptable to retrieve certain valuables, i.e. money, jewelry, stocks, bonds, important papers, small heirlooms, etc., from the property with approval from the Fire Officer in charge. An inventory list shall be made and signed by you. The retrieval shall be accompanied and witnessed by the authorizing officer.

Contacting Your Insurance Company

If your building and/or contents are insured against fire, notify your insurance company or insurance agent as soon as possible. They will assume responsibility or aid you in lessening or resolving a number of burdens resulting from the fire. They may include but not be limited to the following:

- Board-up for securing the damaged structure.
- Temporary housing, i.e., hotel or motel.
- Immediate funds from the advance of eventual insurance claim settlement.
- Replacement of required medicines lost in the fire.

Securing the Property

If you are the building owner, it is your responsibility to see that openings in the structure are secured and/or protected against inclement weather and unauthorized entry. Openings may exist from fire or forcible entry/ventilation as a result of tactical operations by responding firefighters. However, if you are unable to contact your insurance company or agent, the Wayne Fire Department has a list of reputable "board -up" companies serving the City of Wayne. With your approval, the Fire Department will call for you. CAUTION: Do not sign any authorization unless it is stipulated "Board-up Only and/or Emergency Service Only".

Receipts

Beginning now, get receipts for all expenditures. Receipts are important proof for insurance claim purposes. Receipts also verify losses claimed on Federal Income Tax forms.

Animal Shelter

Non-complimentary, 24 hour, emergency service/shelter for pets is available. Look in the local phone book for locations in the area.

Leaving Your Home

The decision to leave may be your decision or one based on the Fire Officer in charges decision that the structure is unsafe for occupancy. The following is a list of items you may want to take with you:

- Identification
- Valuables, i.e. credit cards, check book, insurance policies, savings account book, money jewelry, etc.
- Vital medicines, i.e. insulin, blood pressure medicine, and/or other prescriptions.
- Eyeglasses, hearing aids, prosthetic devices or other personal aids.

Notification of relocation

You may want to notify one or more of the following organizations of your relocation:

- Your insurance agent or adjuster.
- Your mortgage company. Inform them also if the fire.
- Your employer.
- Family and friends.
- Your children's school.
- Your post office. Have them either hold or forward your mail depending on the length of time you expect to be relocated.
- Delivery services such as those for the newspaper.
- Utility companies. These include telephone, heat, power and water.

Temporary Housing/Emergency Relief

Your insurance company may be able to assist you in obtaining temporary housing accommodations.

For City of Wayne residents, the Wayne Goodfellows can also be contacted for temporary assistance at 722-9319.

The American Red Cross may be contacted for providing emergency food, shelter and clothing or other needs. Emergency relief is given without regard to income and is extended up to 3 days if required. The on-scene Fire Officer will contact the above organization on your behalf to initiate relief activities.

Cautions

Fire can rekindle from hidden, smoldering remains. If you choose not to leave, be watchful for signs of heat or smoke.

Household wiring which may have been water damaged should be checked by an electrician before current is turned back on.

Food, beverages and medications exposed to heat, smoke, or soot should be discarded.

Refrigerators or freezers left unopened will hold their temperature for a short time. However, do not attempt to refreeze thawed items.

The Fire Department will see that utilities (water, electricity, gas or heat) are either safe to use or are disconnected before they leave the site. If a utility is disconnected, contact the utility company or a authorized service representative to have the equipment checked for proper working order, make the necessary repairs and reinstitute service. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RECONNECT THE UTILITIES YOURSELF.**

Be careful what you sign. If you have structure and/or contents insurance, let your insurance company handle all issues relating to repair and/or replacements of items lost from fire. Securing the services of a private adjuster is neither encouraged or discouraged, it is your determination. However, it is advised not to secure such services immediately. You have time. Investigate. Wisdom in making such a decision will be very beneficial.

Do not throw away any damaged goods until after an inventory is made. All damages are taken into consideration in developing your insurance claim.

Other Safety Tips

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas that robs the body of oxygen needed to survive. Physical symptoms of CO poison include; headaches, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, watery eyes, disorientation and convulsions. In extreme cases it can be fatal. **IF YOU HAVE ANY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE A PROBLEM RELATING TO CARBON MONOXIDE CALL THE CITY OF WAYNE FIRE DEPARTMENT AT 722-1111 IMMEDIATELY.**

While natural gas is one of the safest energy sources around, carbon monoxide may be present if natural gas does not burn completely due to improperly adjusted burners or recalculation of flue products. The best way to protect yourself and your family from the threat of carbon monoxide is with an annual inspection of flues, chimneys and fuel-burning appliances such as furnaces and water heaters. Carbon monoxide detectors can provide additional peace of mind.

Detecting CO

CO is an odorless and colorless gas, so it's not always easy to detect. Aside from the physical symptoms, there are also signs to look for in your home.

Backdraft from a fireplace, furnace or water heater are signs of trouble and can result in CO. If the flame on a natural gas appliance is yellow and creating soot, it's a sign that the fuel isn't burning completely. Other signs of danger include; high humidity, condensation on cold surfaces such as windows, soot from a fireplace or heating system or a lingering pungent smell. Trouble can start when:

- The flame on a natural gas appliance is yellow and causing carbon or soot.
- Appliances are not properly installed maintained or used.
- A chimney is plugged with debris - squirrel and bird nests are often the culprits.
- Vent pipes are rusted causing spaces, gaps, or leaks.
- Vehicles, lawn mowers or grills are operated in a closed garage.
- A wood burning fireplace uses too much oxygen, causing a backdraft from other appliance flues.
- The furnace air intake is blocked. If housed in a small room, make sure there are louvered doors.
- Auxiliary wood-burning heaters or fireplaces are used incorrectly.
- A gas range is used for space heating.

Placement of Carbon Monoxide Detectors

At least one detector should be located in or near the primary bedroom. The alarm will wake you if you were asleep.

Additional detectors are recommended when there are multiple furnaces or when bedrooms are in different areas of the home.

Place detectors at least five feet from any bathroom. Excessive humidity and aerosols can cause false alarms in some detectors.

Avoid placing detectors near open windows or doors. Weather conditions can also affect the detector's reliability.

If the CO Detector Alarm Sounds

Do not panic:

- Check to see if anyone is experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- If anyone is in need of urgent medical attention, leave the premises immediately and call 911. Then call your gas utility or other qualified contractor to have your appliances checked.

If there is no emergency:

- Open doors and windows to vent the building. Turn the thermostat to the lowest setting. Turn off all unvented appliances (range, auxiliary heaters).
- Check flues for obstructions.
- Check for soot around the base of the water heater and furnace.
- Check for a vehicle operating in the garage.

Check the surroundings:

- Is the detector properly located, away from kitchens, furnace areas and open windows?
- Are there heavy smokers in the house?
- Were cleaning agents or aerosols used recently near the detector?
- What are the weather conditions? Extended rains and dense fog make it more difficult for the home to effectively vent low levels of CO.

If your alarm sounds and you are unable to determine the problem, have your equipment inspected by your gas utility, fuel supply company, or a heating contractor. There is a fee for this service. Explain that your detector is sounding, as well as any other symptoms or conditions that exist.