



STATE FIRE MARSHAL

• Spring 2018 •

Spring Cleaning Fire Safety

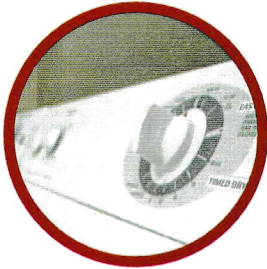
We're finally thawing out here in Ohio, and that means it's time for some spring cleaning! As you begin your spring cleaning, remove clutter that may have built up over the winter months, including boxes, papers and other combustible materials taking up space in your home.



Paper & Boxes

Never store paper products near furnaces and water heaters. Move these items away from those appliances or discard them in your community recycle bins.

Avoid burning boxes and other paper items in fireplaces, wood stoves, outdoor fire pits and bonfires. Embers from paper products can be carried away by rising heat from fire and spread to neighboring buildings and properties. Paper also adds layers of creosote to your chimney, which can build up over time and cause chimney fires.



Clothes Dryers

While most people were taught to clean the lint trap inside their clothes dryer, it is equally as important to clean behind and under the dryer, as well. The tubing coming from the back of the dryer – as well as the rigid vent pipes leading outside – can clog with lint and dust, leading to a potential fire hazard.

If your dryer is taking too long to dry clothes or you smell something odd each time you use it, immediately check all vents, pipes and tubes coming from the back of the dryer. Additionally, do not operate your dryer while you're not home or sleeping.



Smoke Alarms

Just because you've changed the batteries in your smoke alarm, doesn't mean it cannot still malfunction. Dust can accumulate inside a smoke alarm, causing a malfunction or leading to nuisance alarms. That means you should vacuum your alarms to get rid of any dust. Use the soft brush attachment on a traditional vacuum cleaner or a hand vacuum, to reach up and gently clean the alarm of any possible dust buildup. While you're there, make sure to check the date of the alarm to ensure it's not more than 10 years old. Manufacturers recommend replacing smoke alarms before 10 years so you always have the protection your household needs.

Many hazards can easily be found and corrected if you take the time during your spring cleaning efforts. [Check out the Home Fire Safety Checklist](#) for some help!

John R. Kasich,
Governor, State of Ohio

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Home Fire Safety Check List

A residential fire occurs every half hour in Ohio. How safe is your home from fire? To determine the safety of your home from fire hazards, study these questions with your family. Every "yes" answer indicates a positive fire safety situation. However, every "no" answer points to a fire hazard that needs to be corrected.

Matches/lighters and Careless Smoking Hazards Yes No

- Do you keep matches and lighters away from sources of heat? Yes No
- Do you make sure matches and smoking materials are out before disposing of them? Yes No
- Do you have plenty of large, noncombustible ash trays in every room? Yes No
- Is "No Smoking in Bed" a rule in your home? Yes No
- Do you use ash trays outside to avoid mulch fires? Yes No

Electrical Hazards

- Do you have qualified electricians install or extend your wiring? Yes No
- When you buy electrical equipment and appliances, do you always look for the UL label of Underwriters Laboratories Inc.? Yes No
- Are there enough electrical outlets in every room to avoid the need for multiple attachment plugs and long extension cords? Yes No
- Are there proper heat controls on your electrical iron and all electrical appliances used for cooking? Yes No
- Do you have adequate circuit breaker fuses for the equipment used in your home? Yes No
- Are all extension cords of the right size, in the open, not under rugs or through partitions or openings, and are they for temporary use only? Yes No
- Is there adequate wiring in all room for today's electronics? Yes No

Heating and Cooking Hazards

- If you use oil heat or gas heat, is the equipment listed by the proper laboratories, such as UL or the American Gas Association? Yes No
- Before the heating season begins, do you have your heating system inspected and serviced? Yes No

Heating and Cooking Hazards Yes No

(continued)

- If you have a wood burning stove, has it been installed properly according to manufacturers instructions? Yes No
- Do you burn seasoned wood and is it stored in the proper place? Yes No
- Are all vent connectors and flue pipes that pass through attics, floors, ceilings and walls properly installed? Yes No
- Do you clean your chimney at least once a year? (More often if it is used more regularly) Yes No
- Is your kitchen stove, including the oven and the broiler, kept clean of grease? Yes No
- Do all portable heaters in your home bear the label of Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or some other recognized safety testing agency? Yes No
- If you use a portable heater, is it placed well away from any and all combustible materials? Yes No
- Do you always refill the fuel tank of your kerosene heater outdoors? Yes No
- Since portable kerosene heaters use up oxygen when they burn, do you always have adequate ventilation? Yes No
- Do you always turn off the portable heater when you go to bed? Yes No
- Do you make sure that the fuel is not contaminated prior to using it in your kerosene heater? Yes No
- If using kerosene heaters, do you have working carbon monoxide detectors outside of each sleeping area? Yes No
- Is your inside basement door at the head of the stairs properly fitted and kept closed at night? Yes No
- Has everyone in the family been warned never to use any flammable liquids to start a fire in the stove, fireplace or furnace? Yes No
- Is every fireplace equipped with a sturdy metal fire screen? Yes No

(over)

Housekeeping Hazards

Yes No

Do you keep your basement, closets and attic clear of rags, papers and other combustible materials?

If you store paint, varnish, and other items, do you keep the containers tightly closed?

Has everyone in your family been warned never to use gasoline or other flammable liquids for cleaning clothes, furnishings or floors?

Do you clean the lint filter after every use of the dryer?

Do you vacuum and dust your smoke detector?

Yard and Garage Hazards

Do you keep your yard cleaned of leaves, debris and combustible rubbish?

If you keep gasoline for use in a power mower or outboard motor, is it stored in a strong, clearly labeled red gasoline safety-type can?

If your garage is attached to the house, is it separated by a fire-retardant door which is kept closed?

If you store kerosene, is it placed in an approved blue and white container that is clearly labeled kerosene?

Smoke Detectors

Do you have a smoke detector installed on every level of your home and in sleeping areas?

Do you test your detector monthly to ensure that it is in proper working order?

Do you change the batteries twice a year at the time change?

Have you replaced your smoke detector if it is 10 years old or older?

Especially for Parents

Yes No

Do you extinguish candles when you leave the area?

Do you use noncombustible containers to set candles on?

Do you keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children?

Are you careful never to leave children alone in a room with a portable heater or wood stove?

Do you leave a responsible person with your children when you go out, even for a little while?

When you employ babysitters, do you instruct them carefully on what to do in case of a fire?

Do your children know their address?

IMPORTANT: A child learns by example as well as by instruction. In regard to fire safety, do you always set a good example?

In Case of Fire

Do you know the telephone number of your fire department or how to use 911?

Do you know how to call in a fire alarm?

Is there an extinguisher easily accessible in your kitchen and do you know how to use it?

Do you have an escape plan with at least two ways out of every room in your home?

Have you practiced that escape plan by holding fire drills in your home during the day and night?

Have you included caregivers in your drills?

Do you have a central meeting place?



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