Fire Safety and Prevention Checklist

Homeowners need to make a far more comprehensive effort to both prevent and prepare for fires, evaluating fire hazards from the basement to the attic and developing escape strategies that involve the entire family and every room of the house.



DIY Fire Safety Checklist

Basement

- [ ] Areas around furnace, oil burner, wood stove, and other heat-generating equipment are clear of debris, combustible materials, and rags
- [ ] Burner-access doors on the water heater are closed to prevent flame roll-out
- [ ] Breaker panel has not been recalled nor recommended for replacement
- [ ] Breaker wires are not loose
- [ ] No signs of erosion or decay on wire insulators
- [ ] Arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) have been added for protection from electrical wiring faults, especially in older homes. WARNING: If you're not an electrician, call one. Don't try to fix this yourself
- [ ] Oily rags are in air-tight containers and away from heat sources
- [ ] Trash is not stored in the basement

Laundry Room

- [ ] There is no lint build-up inside the dryer or its exhaust duct, and the area behind the dryer is lint-free
- [ ] Trash is not stored in the basement

- [ ] Foil or plastic accordion-type ducting material has been replaced with rigid or semi-rigid metal duct

Garage

- [ ] Oily rags are in air-tight containers and away from heat sources
- [ ] Trash is not stored in the garage
- [ ] There is no pull-down stair access to garage attic space that is linked to the main house
- [ ] Door leading from the garage to the house is solid, has a threshold to block fire from traveling to the house, and weather stripping to prevent carbon monoxide fumes from passing through
- [ ] Garage is clear of accumulated junk that can facilitate fire
- [ ] Gasoline is stored away from ignition sources like heat, sparks, and flames and in containers with approved labels.

First Floor

- [ ] Has a working smoke detector
- [ ] Cooking surfaces are clean of grease and food build-up
- [ ] Gas appliance vents are blocked by sheet metal
- [ ] Towels, curtains, plastic utensils, and pot holders are stored away from hot surfaces
- [ ] Cookies and other kid-friendly snacks are not stored above the stove
- [ ] Kitchen has a working fire extinguisher
- [ ] Closet lights are have covers (not just a bare bulb)
- [ ] Light bulbs meet the recommended wattage of each fixture
- [ ] Incandescent lights are not exposed, do not have a shade closer than 12 inches, and are at least 12 inches from combustibles
- [ ] Furniture meets updated recommendations for fire-resistant upholstery
- [ ] Fireplace has a screen, surrounding area is clear of debris, and flue is clear of obstructions
- [ ] Chimney is cleaned annually
- [ ] Chimney has fire-stop of gypsum board or fire-code gypsum board at each floor penetration
- [ ] Metal vent areas around chimney are blocked by sheet metal
- [ ] Electric cords don't run under carpets and are not pressed against a wall
- [ ] Extension cords and outlets are not overloaded (powering too many devices)

Upstairs

- [ ] Mattresses were made after 1973

- [ ] Each bedroom and hallway has a working smoke detector
- [ ] Closet lights are not exposed
- [ ] Light bulbs meet the recommended wattage of each fixture
- [ ] Incandescent lights are not exposed, do not have a shade, and are at least 12 inches away from combustibles
- [ ] Electric cords don't run under carpets and are not pressed against a wall or bed
- [ ] Extension cords and outlets are not overloaded
- [ ] Portable heaters or other heat-producing appliances are three feet from beds and other flammable materials, such as curtains
- [ ] Each bedroom has an escape ladder that all members of the family know how to use
- [ ] Electric blankets are UL-approved, with cords in solid condition
- [ ] The floor has a working fire extinguisher

Attic

- [ ] There are no gaps around the chimney that allow you to see the floor below
- [ ] There is at least a three-inch gap between fiberglass insulation and lighting fixtures

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