Home Safety Checklist



Electrical Cords and Outlets

- [ ] Check for frayed wires. - Repair or replace any loose or frayed wires on all electrical devices.
- [ ] Follow the path of cords - No cords should run under rugs or across doorways.
- [ ] Baby-proof - If you have any small children in your house, place plastic safety covers over unused outlets.
- [ ] Rethink extension cords - Consider adding electrical outlets where you currently rely on extension cords.
- [ ] Check for a faulty electrical system - Feel all outlets and plugs to see if any are warm; if so, have an electrician check them.
- [ ] Don’t overload the system - Make sure that you’ve followed manufacturers’ directions about maximum wattage of lamp bulbs and outlet requirements for plugs.
- [ ] And don’t overload any one outlet - Be certain that you have no more than one high-wattage appliance plugged into a single outlet.

Home Heating

- [ ] Examine the outside vents - They should be properly sealed and clear of obstruction to prevent carbon monoxide buildup in the house. Recheck during and after a snowstorm.
- [ ] Pick the right wood - If you use a fireplace or a woodstove, stock up on dry seasoned wood, which burns without producing a lot of creosote. A buildup of creosote—soot—in the chimney or flue can be dangerous, causing chimney fires.
- [ ] Hire a chimney sweep - Have flues and chimneys inspected and cleaned by a professional annually.
- [ ] Inspect wood-burning stoves twice monthly - Make sure the door latch closes properly. The room should have a working smoke detector. And never let a child use the stove unattended.
- [ ] Inspect water heaters annually - The temperature should be set at no higher than 120 degrees to prevent burns. Never leave

children alone near a water heater, and keep combustible and flammable materials well away from it.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

- [ ] Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors generously - These should be on each floor of the house, covering all sleeping areas.
- [ ] Test alarms monthly - Replace any that don't work. (In any case, alarms should be replaced every 10 years.)
- [ ] Replace batteries annually - Or sooner, if the alarm chirps.
- [ ] Clean all detectors - Vacuum each grille.
- [ ] Post the fire department's carbon-monoxide-reporting emergency number - If it differs from 911, keep the number by every phone
- [ ] Demonstrate the sound of each detector - Family members need to know the difference.

Fire Extinguishers

- [ ] Place extinguishers strategically - Keep one in the kitchen and one on every floor. And learn how to use them.
- [ ] Replace extinguishers when necessary - Follow the schedule suggested by the manufacturer, and always replace an extinguisher that appears damaged.
- [ ] Consider installing a sprinkler system.

Escape Plans

- [ ] Create an escape plan with two exit routes in case of fire - Practice it twice a year (once at night) with the whole family. For details, see the National Fire Protection Association's website, nfpa.org.
- [ ] Choose a meeting place - Set a plan for meeting up in case of a local or national disaster. See nfpa.org.
- [ ] If you live in a two-story house, buy a rescue ladder - It should attach to an upper-level window casing to provide an alternate escape route.

In Homes With Small Children

- [ ] Lock the cabinets - Install safety latches and locks.
- [ ] Install window guards on every window - Make sure one window in each room can be used as a fire exit.
- [ ] Install safety gates - Bar the top and bottom of stairs.
- [ ] Lock up hazardous materials - Place any poisonous or hazardous products in locked cabinets. Post the poison-control hotline's number (800-222-1222) by every phone.
- [ ] Make sure all your medicines and vitamins have childproof caps - Store them out of children's reach.
- [ ] Stow away sharp knives - Scissors and cosmetic tools, too, as well as matches and plastic bags, should be kept out of children's reach.
- [ ] Lock up any guns - Be sure they are unloaded and separate from ammunition.

- [ ] Install padding on furniture with sharp edges - And put doorknob covers on entry doors so kids can't get out unattended.
- [ ] If you have a pool, fence it in - A pool should be enclosed with a four-sided fence and a childproof gate.
- [ ] Teach children their address and how to dial 911 - As early as possible, children need to know these fundamentals.

Burglarproofing

- [ ] Install a sturdy deadbolt lock on every door to the outside - This should include the door into the house from the garage.
- [ ] Keep your house looking lived-in when you're away - Arrange for the lawn to be mowed, stop mail delivery, install timers for selected lights, leave a car in the driveway, and leave drapes or shades open at least a bit
- [ ] Advertise prominently any home security system you have installed - You might think about putting up signs even if you don't have a system.
- [ ] Examine your landscaping - Trim shrubs and trees near windows and doors that provide hiding places for burglars, and prune limbs that serve as ladders to upper windows.
- [ ] Purchase a metal bar or a solid-wood dowel to insert in the tracking of sliding glass doors - This will prevent anyone from opening them.
- [ ] Put your street number, not your name, on your mailbox.
- [ ] Give a spare key to a trusted neighbor or nearby friend - Thieves know all about fake rocks and other hide-a-key tricks.

Burglarproofing

- [ ] In any room with window bars, make sure at least one has a quick-release mechanism - Replace or retrofit as needed.
- [ ] Install motion-sensing floodlights in the backyard.

Miscellaneous

- [ ] Make sure your house number is visible from the street - It should be easily spotted, in case an emergency vehicle needs to look for it.
- [ ] Store flammable liquids away from any flame source - It's preferable to store them outside the house.
- [ ] Keep flammable objects away from the kitchen stove.
- [ ] Plug a rechargeable flashlight into a socket by your bed - You'll be able to light the way through smoke in a fire or signal to firefighters.
- [ ] Install nonslip decals or a nonskid tub mat in your tub.
- [ ] Put lights and light switches at the top and bottom of the stairs - Prevent falls in the dark.
- [ ] Paint the bottom basement step white so it's more visible - You'll be less likely to trip, take a fall, or trip over it.

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