

Fire Alarms

Every home in Ontario requires (by law) a working smoke alarm on every storey and outside all sleeping areas. It's recommended to have an alarm in each bedroom.

Here are some quick guidelines to follow for fire alarms:

1. Smoke alarms are the safest on the ceiling or high on the wall
2. Keep away from the kitchen, bathroom, ceiling fans, air registers, or windows.
3. It is against the law for Tenants to remove batteries, tamper with or disable smoke alarms.
4. Test smoke alarms once a month
5. Replace batteries annually
6. Replace the actual alarm every 10 years
7. Never use reusable batteries for smoke alarms
8. Occasionally clean the outside of the alarm with a vacuum
9. Never paint over a smoke alarm

Fire Prevention

Most common type of a fire in your home is a kitchen fire. The leading cause of fires in the home is unattended cooking. The other types of fires that can occur in homes include heating equipment, electrical, smoking, and candles.

Quick guidelines for fire prevention

Cooking:

1. Stay in the kitchen and watch what you heat
2. Things that can burn such as paper towels or tea towels should always be kept away from the stove
3. Turn handles inward when cooking to avoid hot spills
4. If you have young children, keep them away from the cooking area and for added safety, cook on the back burners first
5. To extinguish a small grease/oil fire, always keep a lid and oven mitts nearby when you are cooking to smother the fire (carefully slide a lid over the pan to extinguish the flames and turn off the burner; do not move the pan and keep the lid on until the pan cools completely). Never use flour or water as it spreads the flames. If you have a fire in the oven or in the microwave, keep the door closed and turn off the heat

Heating Equipment:

"Remember, space heaters need space!"

Keep anything that can burn at least three feet (one metre) away from any heating equipment such as: a furnace, wood stove, fire place or space heater.

Electrical Safety

Have a licensed electrical contractor make repairs or additions to your electrical system. Extension cords are not intended to be permanent wiring. Use a good quality power bar with its own circuit breaker. Do not place cords under carpets or across door ways. Never overload circuits.

All major appliances (i.e. fridge, dryer) should be plugged directly into the wall outlet. Unplug any heat producing appliances when not in use (i.e. space heater, kettle, curling iron, etc.).

Always use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the fixture. Never leave anything flammable hanging over a lamp shade as that item can heat up quickly and turn into a big fire.

Smoking:

If you smoke, smoke outside. Never smoke in bed or smoke if you are impaired by alcohol, medication or drugs. Use deep, sturdy ashtrays. Dispose of hot ashes properly - wet them down/put in a large tin can or sand. Never butt out in flower pots, especially those containing peat moss and/or mulch as they are highly combustible.

Do not smoke in a house where portable medical oxygen is used. Keep oxygen cylinders at least five (5) feet from a heat source, open flames or electrical devices.

Candles:

Never leave candles unattended while they are burning. Extinguish all candles when you leave any room, when you leave your home or when you go to sleep. Use sturdy non-combustible candle holders and never leave candles where young children or pets could knock them over. Consider using battery-operated flameless candles instead, which can look, smell and feel like real candles.

Fire Extinguishers

Install fire extinguishers where they are visible and accessible, preferably near an exit and not within ten (10) feet of a potential source of a fire. Do not store them in closets or under sinks. Only attempt to extinguish a fire if it is small, is not spreading and it doesn't pose a threat to you. Make sure that everyone has evacuated and that 911 have already been called. Never put the fire between yourself and your way out. Know when and how to operate your extinguisher.

Remember the word PASS when using a fire extinguisher: Pull the pin, Aim low at the base of the fire, Squeeze the handles together and Sweep the nozzle from side to side. Once the fire extinguisher has been used, it must be serviced (MFES does not provide this recharge service) and replace disposable models after every use. Inspect portable extinguishers monthly and have them serviced annually.

Sources

<http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/residents/prevention>

<http://www.fipreca.ca/fire-extinguishers/>

<http://www.fipreca.ca/home-safety/>

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