

Homeowner's Fire Prevention Guide







SMOKE ALARMS

Smoke alarms that are properly installed and maintained play a vital role in reducing fire deaths and injury. If there is a fire in your home, smoke alarms give you time to get out.



Safety Tips

- Install smoke alarms on every floor (including the basement) and outside bedrooms.
- Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home for the best protection. When one sounds, they all sound. Make sure you can hear the sound of the smoke alarm from all rooms.
- Install combination alarms that detect both smoke and carbon monoxide.
- People who are hard of hearing can use special alarms that have strobe lights and bed shakers.
- A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.

Testing

- Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button.
- Make sure everyone in the home recognizes the sound of the smoke alarm and knows how to respond.
- A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep alarms at least three metres from kitchens and bathrooms.

Maintenance

- Replace batteries at least once a year.
- Replace all smoke alarms every 10 years or per manufacturer's instructions—whichever date comes first.
- Replace any smoke alarm that does not respond after a new battery has been installed. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning to keep smoke alarms working.



CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

What is carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that is odourless, colourless, and tasteless and is often called “the silent killer.”

CO poisoning can result from malfunctioning or improperly vented furnaces or other fuel-burning heating and cooking equipment, portable generators, water heaters, or cars left running in garages.

Installation

- Install and maintain carbon monoxide (CO) alarms outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home.
- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for placement and mounting height.

Testing, Replacement & Maintenance

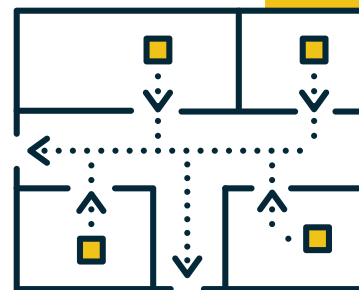
- Test CO alarms at least once a month and replace them if they fail to respond when tested.
- Replace the CO alarms according to manufacturer’s instructions or when the end-of-life signal sounds.
- To keep CO alarms working, follow manufacturer’s instructions for cleaning.
- Have fuel-burning heating equipment (fireplaces, furnaces, water heaters, wood stoves, coal stoves, space heaters, and portable heaters) and chimneys inspected by a professional every year.



PLAN YOUR ESCAPE

Fire can spread rapidly through your home, leaving you as little as one or two minutes to escape safely once the smoke alarm sounds. Pull together everyone in your household and make a plan.

- 1 Plan two ways out of each bedroom – a main exit (usually the door) and an alternate, such as a window. The second exit must be practical and easy to use.
- 2 Know that when an alarm sounds, you have as little as one to two minutes to escape safely.
- 3 Establish a meeting place outside, a safe distance from the house. This helps you to account for everyone and lets firefighters know if anyone is still inside.
- 4 Provide each family member with a copy of the plan and post it on the fridge for house guests to see.
- 5 Do not assume young children, the elderly and the disabled will be awakened by smoke alarms. They should be assisted by an adult during a fire emergency.
- 6 Hold a fire drill in your home twice a year - during the day, but also at night. Place the “fire” in different locations. Press the test button on your smoke alarm to start your fire drill. This will ensure everyone knows the sound of the smoke alarm, and knows what to do in a real emergency.
- 7 Ensure windows are easily opened and have fire escape ladders available where the window sill is much higher than the ground outside.



You have
approximately
1 TO 2 MINUTES
TO ESCAPE
SAFELY
when an
alarm sounds



WHAT TO DO IN A FIRE



If you see fire, smoke or if your smoke alarms sounds, **immediately leave your home and call 9-1-1** from your meeting place.



Get low!

Go under the smoke to the nearest exit.



Test doors before opening them.

If the door is not a safe exit, use your alternate escape.



If you are trapped, protect yourself until help arrives.

Close doors, cover vents, and seal the gap under the door with bedding or clothes.



Teach children to **never hide in closets** or under beds.



Get out and stay out!

Do not re-enter the home to get belongings, pets or people. Tell firefighters immediately if anyone is left in the home.



FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Types of fire extinguishers

For domestic purposes, purchase an approved ULC extinguisher that has an ABC rating.

Class A – Combustible fires, such as wood, cloth, and paper.

Class B – Flammable liquids, such as gasoline, oil, and paints.

Class C – Electrical fires sparked by wiring and appliances.

Class D – Fire involving combustible metals such as magnesium.

Class K – Fire fueled by flammable liquids unique to cooking, cooking oils and greases.

How to use a fire extinguisher

The best time to learn how to use a fire extinguisher is before you ever need to.

It's easy to use a fire extinguisher by remembering the acronym P.A.S.S.:

PPULL the pin.

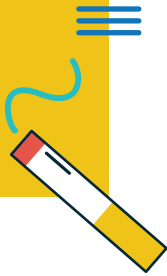
AAIM the nozzle at the base of the fire.

SSQUEEZE the trigger or lever.

SWEEP the extinguisher from side to side until it is empty.

- Install fire extinguishers close to exits. When using, keep your back to a clear exit for an easy escape. If the room fills with smoke, leave immediately.
- A typical 2.5 lb fire extinguisher will last approximately 8-12 seconds. If the fire is large or does not extinguish, leave the building and call 9-1-1.
- Fire extinguishers should be replaced after first use or after 12 years.
- Portable extinguishers must be serviced or replaced after each use.
- Check your extinguisher gauge monthly for proper pressure and expiry.





SMOKING & FIRE SAFETY

Careless smoking is the number one cause of fire-related deaths.

Smoking-related fires can be easily prevented by always ensuring to fully extinguish cigarettes and cigars in a deep, stable based ashtray.

- Soak cigarette ashes and butts in water before throwing them away.
- Always use an outdoor garbage to dispose of soaked ashes. Ensure the garbage can is a safe distance from your house, fences and other combustible materials.
- Never use a potted plant to extinguish your cigarettes. Potted plants contain fertilizers and organic substances that are extremely flammable.
- Never throw cigarettes into household garbage cans as they typically contain combustible materials that can easily ignite and cause a home fire.
- Keep lighters and matches locked up and out of reach from children.

If you choose to smoke – smoke outside!

Never smoke in your home while drowsy, lying down, in bed, consuming alcohol or using medication which may affect alertness. If smoking in the home, install a smoke alarm in your bedroom in case you fall asleep.



IN THE KITCHEN

Cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home fire injuries in Canada.

Most can be prevented by following simple fire safety steps:

- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Keep the cooking area clean. Wipe appliances and surfaces after cooking to prevent grease buildup.
- Keep anything that can catch fire – oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels, curtains – away from your stove top.
- Always turn pot handles inward to prevent pots from being knocked off the stove or pulled down by small children.
- Wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking.
- Teach children about safe cooking. Children and pets should stay at least one metre away from the stove.
- Cooking oil can easily start a fire. Never leave hot oil or grease-laden foods unattended.
- Never pour water on a grease fire. Water causes grease fires to flare and spread.





What to do if a cooking fire starts

Extinguishing a pan fire

1. Carefully slide a lid-large enough to completely cover the top-over the pan using an oven mitt.
2. Turn off the stove burner.
3. Leave the lid on until completely cool.
4. Do not carry the burning pan to a sink or outside. Movement may cause the fire to grow, or cause hot grease to spill and cause burns.

Extinguishing an oven or microwave fire

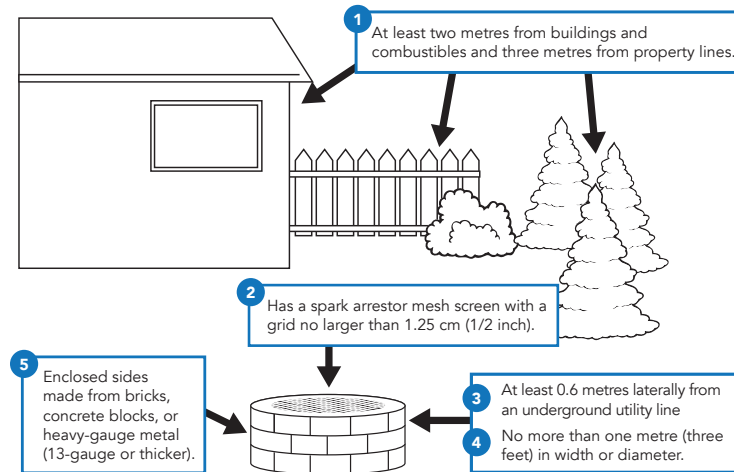
1. Keep the door closed. Opening the oven or microwave door may allow the fire to spread.
2. If safe, turn off or unplug the appliance.
3. If flames do not go out immediately, call 9-1-1.

BACKYARD FIRE PITS

Backyard fire pits in the Urban Service Area require a permit. If you have recently installed a fire pit or are a new homeowner with an existing fire pit, you are required to submit an application.

Portable fire pits do not require a permit. All safety guidelines for fire pits must still be followed.

- Never leave your fire unattended and be aware of the safety of children and pets.
- Keep your fire small and watch for sparks and strong winds.
- Burn only dry, well-seasoned wood, commercial fire logs, or briquettes.
- Keep a fire extinguisher, hose, or source of water nearby when using your fire pit.
- Completely extinguish fires and remember to SOAK IT, STIR IT, and SOAK IT AGAIN.



**For more information
about obtaining a
backyard fire pit permit:**

Contact Pulse by
calling **780-743-7000**
or at www.rmwb.ca/firesafety

**For fire ban information
in Alberta, please visit
www.albertafirebans.ca**



SOAK IT



STIR IT



SOAK IT
AGAIN



HOME HEATING SAFETY

- Have a one metre “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- All heaters need space. Keep curtains, bedding or anything that can burn at least one metre away.
- Use heating equipment listed by a qualified testing laboratory, like the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (ULC).
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected annually by a qualified professional.



Fireplaces and Woodstoves

- Inspect and clean your fireplaces, vents and chimneys regularly.
- Check for rust or creosote, which is a dark substance that forms in the flue. Creosote buildup can catch fire.
- Note any excessive heat on the walls above your fireplace. This could be a sign of improper chimney installation and is a potential fire hazard.
- Always use a properly fitted screen to cover the fireplace opening. Protect floors and walls with non-combustible shields.
- Keep a heat-tempered glass or metal fireplace screen in place.
- Dispose of fireplace ashes in a closed metal can and store outside.
- Burn only dry, seasoned wood and never use flammable liquid to start the fire.



Portable Space Heaters

- Space heaters should be placed on a level, hard and non-combustible surface (avoid carpets or rugs).
- Do not leave children or pets unattended around a space heater.
- Ensure your space heater is equipped with an automatic cut-off device that shuts it off if tipped over.
- Fuel-burning space heaters (kerosene or gas) should be inspected annually. Ensure you are using the proper grade of fuel source for your unit and that it is cleaned regularly.



Furnaces

- Furnaces should be inspected by a qualified technician at least once a year.
- Each month, inspect your furnace for the following:
 - Filter – Replace or clean according to the manufacturer's instructions.
 - Vents – look for any signs of rust, blockages, or soot. If found, consult with a qualified technician.
 - Gas burners – the flame should be blue. If the flame is yellow, consult with a qualified technician.



BBQ SAFETY

Cleaning and Maintenance

- Keep your grill clean and free of grease buildup. Follow the manufacturer's cleaning and storing instructions.
- Ensure your barbeque is free of rust, dust and rodent nests after the winter.
- Check cylinder connections and hoses for leaks by brushing a 50:50 mixture of liquid soap and water. Rising bubbles when the gas is turned on indicates a leak.

Proper use

- Always ensure that the propane cylinder valves are fully open when barbeque is in use or fully closed when the barbecue is not in use.
- To minimize potential of carbon monoxide poisoning, only barbeque outside -- never indoors.
- Store and use your grill on a large flat surface that cannot burn (ex. concrete or asphalt).
- Have a fire extinguisher close by in case of a fire.
- Keep barbeque one-metre away from siding or combustible surface.
- Always light the barbeque as soon as the gas flow is turned on. Never light a barbeque while the lid is down.
- Never use flammable or combustible liquids other than a barbecue starter fluid to start a charcoal barbeque.
- Allow barbeque a cool-down period before moving, storing or covering.
- Never store extra propane cylinders near the barbeque. Excess heat may lead to an overpressure condition in the cylinder and cause it to release propane from the cylinder relief valve.



PERSONAL HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

- ☐ Do you have a working smoke alarm on every level of your home?
- ☐ Are you testing your smoke alarms monthly to ensure they are working?
- ☐ Do you have working carbon monoxide alarms in your home?
- ☐ Do you have a home escape plan?
- ☐ Have you practiced your home escape plan with your family?
- ☐ Do you have a portable fire extinguisher in your home?
- ☐ Do you know how to use a portable fire extinguisher?
- ☐ Is your home address clearly visible during the day and night from the street?
- ☐ Are candles on a sturdy base, and away from combustible materials?
- ☐ Do you blow out candles before leaving the room?
- ☐ Are matches and lighters out of reach of children?
- ☐ Are products like gasoline and propane stored safely outside?
- ☐ Are space heaters located a safe distance from combustible materials?
- ☐ If you have a fireplace, is it properly screened?
- ☐ Do you have a permit from the Fire Prevention Branch for your stationary backyard fire pit?
- ☐ Are gas appliances routinely and properly maintained?
- ☐ Are you aware of the hazards of overloading electrical outlets?
- ☐ Is the kitchen area free of hazards?
- ☐ Do you stay in the kitchen while cooking, never leaving your pan unattended?

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS? Find more information at www.rmwb.ca/firesafety or call Pulse at 780-743-7000

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Emergencies
9-1-1

Report a Wildfire
310-FIRE (3473)

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
General Inquiries 310-0000

Pulse: RMWB Contact Call Line
780-743-7000
Toll-free 1-800-973-9663

RESOURCES

RMWB Fire Prevention Information
rmwb.ca/firesafety

Alberta Wildfire
wildfire.alberta.ca

Alberta Fire Bans
albertafirebans.ca



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF **WOOD BUFFALO**