

Fire Safety Tips



- **Buy the most fire resistant furniture available.** Look for upholstered furniture designed to reduce the likelihood of fire from cigarettes and small open flame ignition sources. Where possible, buy furniture that meets California's fire safety standard known as Technical Bulletin 117. Several manufacturers make furniture compliant with the California standard for products sold throughout the U.S.
- **Keep cigarettes and other smoking materials away from upholstered furniture.** Do not place or leave ashtrays on the arms of chairs where they can be knocked off. Always check the furniture where smokers have been sitting for improperly discarded smoking materials. Ashes and lighted cigarettes can fall unnoticed behind or between cushions or under furniture and smolder for hours before bursting into flame.
- **Keep lighters and matches out of the sight and reach of children.** Children as young as two years old are capable of lighting cigarette lighters and matches. Purchase only lighters that meet the mandatory federal safety standard for child-resistant lighters.
- **Take care with candles.** Never burn candles on or near upholstered furniture or other items that can catch fire. Place lighted candles on a stable, heat-resistant surface, away from children or pets. Use holders specifically designed for use with candles, preferably with high sides that help protect the flame from drafts. Completely extinguish all candles when leaving a room or before going to sleep.
- **Use space heaters with caution.** Locate space heaters at least 3 feet away from upholstered furniture, drapes and other things that can burn in a room. Turn off space heaters when you are not in the room or when you go to sleep.
- **Install and maintain smoke alarms.** Install working smoke alarms on every level of the home, outside sleeping areas and inside bedrooms, per manufacturer's specifications. Keep smoke alarms free of dust and insects. Test and replace batteries in alarms per manufacturer's instructions. In addition, experts say that the smoke alarm unit itself should be replaced every 10 years. Never remove batteries from or otherwise disable smoke alarms. Consider new technologies, such as alarms that have extended-life batteries and alarms that detect both smoldering and flaming ignitions.
- **Install and maintain residential fire sprinklers.** According to the National Fire Protection Association, when working fire sprinklers are present in a home, the chances of dying in a fire and the average property loss per fire are both cut by one-half to two-thirds, compared to where sprinklers are not present.
- **Practice an escape plan.** Develop and regularly rehearse an escape plan with all members of your household, so that when the smoke alarm sounds, everyone will move to a safe location outside the home.
- **In case of a fire, GET OUT!** If a fire occurs in upholstered furniture or elsewhere in the home, GET YOURSELF AND OTHERS OUT IMMEDIATELY AND STAY OUT! Do not try to gather personal possessions or try to put the fire out yourself, because the fire can quickly grow too big and you could become trapped or impaired by toxic smoke. Call the fire department from outside or from a neighbor's house.