



# SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY FIRE WANTS TO HELP PREVENT FIRES ON THE HOME FRONT



Nationally, Fire Prevention Week is October 5-11, 2008 with a theme of “Prevent Home Fires”. In 2007, there were an estimated 399,000 reported home structure fires resulting in 2,865 civilian deaths and 12,500 civilian injuries and \$6.8 billion in direct damage in the United States. Home fires caused 84% of civilian deaths and 77% of injuries. With these statistics in mind San Bernardino County Fire Department wants to encourage residents throughout **San Bernardino County** to practice some home safety tips.

**COOKING** fires are the leading cause of home fires and injuries.

- ✓ Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period time, turn off the stove.
- ✓ Keep anything that can catch fire – potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags – away from your stovetop.
- ✓ Wear short, close fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire.
- ✓ Always keep an oven mitt and lid handy. If a small fire starts in a pan on the stove, put on the oven mitt and smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan. Turn off the burner. Don't remove the lid until it is completely cool.

**HEATING** fires are the second-leading cause of home fires

- ✓ Install and maintain carbon monoxide alarms to avoid risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- ✓ Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- ✓ Keep all things that can burn, such as paper, bedding or furniture, at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- ✓ Turn portable space heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.
- ✓ An oven should not be used to heat a home.

**SMOKING** materials (cigarettes, cigars, pipes, etc) are the leading cause of fire deaths in the United States. The most common material first ignited in home smoking fires are the mattresses, bedding and upholstered furniture.

- ✓ If you smoke, choose fire-safe cigarettes if they are available in your area. For more information on this go to: [www.firesafecigarettes.org](http://www.firesafecigarettes.org).
- ✓ If you smoke, smoke outside.
- ✓ Wherever you smoke, use deep, sturdy ashtrays.
- ✓ Never smoke in a home where oxygen is used.
- ✓ Keep matches and lighters (even toy like/novelty lighters) up high in a locked cabinet, out of the reach of children.

## **ELECTRICAL**

- ✓ Keep lamps, light fixtures, and light bulbs away from anything that can burn, such as lampshades, bedding, curtains, and clothing.
- ✓ Replace cracked and damaged electrical cords.
- ✓ Use extension cords for temporary wiring only. Consider having additional circuits or receptacles added by a qualified electrician.
- ✓ Homes with young children should have tamper-resistant electrical receptacles.
- ✓ Call a qualified electrician or landlord if you have recurring problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers, discolored or warm wall outlets, flickering lights or a burning or rubbery smell coming from an appliance.

**CANDLES** - the top five days for home candle fires usually are Halloween, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day.

- ✓ Keep candles at least 12 inches from anything that can burn.
- ✓ Use sturdy, safe candleholders.
- ✓ Never leave a burning candle unattended. Blow out candles when you leave a room.
- ✓ Avoid using candles in bedrooms and sleeping areas; consider battery operated flameless candles.
- ✓ Use flashlights for emergency lighting.

Preventing home fires, takes an entire family. Taking a few moments to do a home fire inspection can be fun and extremely beneficial. In addition to the safety tips outlined above, following are even more aspects to be aware of in the safety of your family.

- ✓ Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- ✓ Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button.
- ✓ Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.
- ✓ Make sure everyone can hear the sound of the smoke alarms.
- ✓ Have a home fire escape plan. Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible, and a meeting place outside. Practice your escape plan twice a year.
- ✓ When the smoke alarm sounds, get out and stay out.
- ✓ If you are building or remodeling your home, consider a residential fire sprinkler system.

For more tips to prevent home fires as well as other fire and life safety information visit our website at [www.sbcfire.org](http://www.sbcfire.org) or you can contact Penni Overstreet-Murphy, Fire Prevention Specialist in Public Education at 909-386-8472.