

Fire Safety

By Chad Simons, Unified Fire Authority
Firefighter/Paramedic



October is fire prevention month. It is a time for us to reflect on fire safety tips and practices to make our homes as fire proof as possible. True, nothing is fire proof, but the average citizen can do many things within the home to ensure some common causes of fires are prevented. Unified Fire Authority has valuable recommendations that can help all citizens be fire safe. A few of those are discussed in this article. More information can be found by spending a few minutes on the internet.

The first thing we can do is ensure our homes have functioning smoke detectors. Some of you reading may think this is so repeated that you are tired of it. Well, smoke detectors continue to save thousands of lives each year. On the reverse, a lack of functioning smoke detector in the home contributes to the loss of lives that could have been saved. This is a huge nationwide problem. Even here in Utah, fire departments continue to respond to fires that burn in houses and apartments that do not have an operating smoke detector. Make a habit of replacing the batteries regularly. We recommend changing the batteries every six months when you adjust clocks for daylight savings time.

Other fire safety tips are equally important. Do not plug multiple plugs into outlets. A general rule of thumb is that the outlet can support the number of appliances that you can plug directly into the wall. Plug adaptors that make two outlets into six are not recommended. The only exception is if you use a fuse protected power strip. Even extension cords are discouraged when used as a permanent power source to an electrical appliance.

We all love candles and the fresh scent they bring to our homes. Unattended candles start hundreds of fires nation wide every year. A great alternative are the fuse protected candle warmers. These plug into the wall and heat the candle up just enough to get the scent out of the wax, eliminating the need for flame!

As the season gets colder and we begin to use furnaces and fireplaces to warm our homes, we should first ensure that combustible materials are stored well away from flame sources. Sometimes our spring cleaning practices force us to place items in the spaces near our furnaces and hot water heaters and are then forgotten. Take a few extra minutes before starting the furnace back up for the winter to ensure the 36 inches around your furnace is free of cardboard boxes, papers, and other easily ignited materials.

These are all very simple things that nearly everyone can do to make homes more fire safe. Each of these is responsible for thousands of fires and hundreds of fatalities from structure fires nationwide. For more information visit www.unifiedfire.org, www.nfpa.org, or other fire prevention websites that can easily be located on most search engines.