



# WESTMINSTER FIRE DEPARTMENT

## HOME FIRE SAFETY INFORMATION

Fire safety is crucial for protecting your home and the people you care about. Each year, thousands of homes are affected by fires, many of which can be prevented with simple precautions. This information sheet provides essential tips to help you reduce the risk of fire in your home. From cooking safety to the importance of having an escape plan, these guidelines are designed to keep you and your loved ones safe. Stay informed, stay prepared, and stay safe.

### Cooking Fire Safety

- Never leave a hot stove unattended
- Keep flammable items away from the stove (towels, paper, curtains)
- Use a timer to remind you that food is cooking
- Have a “kid-free zone” of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food is
- If you have a small grease cooking fire, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it’s completely cooled
- For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed

### Smoke Alarms

- Smoke alarms save lives by providing early warning of a fire
- Check the batteries twice per year! Alarms should be replaced every 10 years
- Smoke alarms should be placed in each bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on each floor of the residence, including the basement

### Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- CO alarms should be placed on each floor of the residence & within 15 feet of sleeping rooms
- Do not place too close to furnaces, water heaters, or fireplaces

### Plan Your Escape

- If a fire breaks out in your home, you may only have minutes to escape. Develop (and practice) an evacuation plan
- Know at least two ways out of every room. Ensure all doors and windows easily open
- Teach kids how to escape on their own in case you aren’t with them
- If you have to evacuate, NEVER go back inside to retrieve pets or belongings
- Identify a meeting place outside where all family members can reunite
- In a smoky environment, crawl low under the smoke

### Close Your Doors

- Closed doors can prevent a fire from spreading throughout the home
- “Close before you doze” – sleeping with your bedroom door closed may keep you safe in the event of a fire
- If you have to evacuate for a fire, close the doors on your way out. This may help keep the fire contained to one room of the house

  
*more safety tips on back!*



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### Grilling Safety

- Before you turn on your gas grill, check the gas supply hose for leaks
- Keep the grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup
- Place the grill well away from the home, deck railings, or out from under eaves and overhanging branches
- For charcoal grills – only use charcoal starter fluid and let the coals cool completely before disposing in a metal container

### Be Fire-Safe with Electricity

- You do not need a flame to start a fire. Fires can start when heat builds up near things that burn
- Keep things that burn, like scarves, clothes, and curtains, off lamps and lightbulbs
- Heavy things placed on top of a cord can wear out the cord and cause a fire

### Candle Safety

- A candle is an open flame which means that it can easily ignite anything that can burn
- Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Avoid using candles in the bedroom and other areas where people may fall asleep
- Never leave a child alone in a room with a burning candle
- Keep matches and lighters up high and out of children's reach

### Lithium-Ion Battery Safety

- Lithium-ion batteries supply power to many devices including cell phones, laptops, e-bikes, and toys. If not used correctly, or if damaged, these batteries can catch on fire or explode
- Only use the battery designed for the device & charging cord that came with device
- Do not charge a device under your pillow, on your bed, or on a couch

### Safety with Oily Rags

- Oil-based paints, stains, and varnishes are often used for home improvement projects. It is common to use rags to wipe up spills or clean brushes. Oil-soaked wet rags can ignite on their own. They can start a fire if not handled correctly. The oils release heat as they dry – if the heat is not released in the air, it builds up, traps the heat, and a fire can start
- Never leave cleaning rags in a pile. At the end of the day, take the rags outside to dry. Hang the rags outside or spread them on the ground. Weigh them down so they do not blow away. Keep them away from buildings
- Dispose of in an air-tight sealed metal container

### Dialing 911

- Dial 911 for any life or death emergencies. Fire, medical, or police units (or all 3!) will be sent to assist
- Know your address! Be prepared to provide your address to the dispatcher. Consider displaying your address in your house so your kids and/or visitors are able to quickly read and provide the address
- Answer all questions and follow all instructions from the dispatcher. They will guide you through the emergency