

Careless Smoking

Fire Prevention and Home Fire Safety

About **3,500 Americans die each year** in fires and about 18,300 are injured. You can stop the fire before it starts. Use this fact sheet to learn how to prevent a fire in your home and know what to do if you have a fire.

Stop a fire caused by careless smoking, before it starts:

- ▶ The safest place to smoke is outside of the home. Use a sturdy ashtray or a can filled with sand to collect ashes.
- ▶ Use ashtrays with a wide, stable base that are hard to tip over. If it wobbles, it won't work.
- ▶ Ashtrays should be set on something sturdy and hard to ignite, like a table.
- ▶ **Put It Out. All the Way. Every Time.** The cigarette really needs to be completely stubbed out in the ashtray.



- ▶ Chairs and sofas catch on fire fast and burn fast. Don't put ashtrays on them. If people have been smoking in the home, check for cigarettes under cushions.
- ▶ NEVER smoke while using oxygen or anywhere near an oxygen source, even if the source is turned off. Oxygen makes any fire burn hotter and faster.
- ▶ If you smoke, use reduced ignition strength cigarettes, commonly referred to as "fire-safe cigarettes."
- ▶ If you are drowsy or falling asleep, put it out. Smoking in bed is just plain wrong.
- ▶ Close a matchbook before striking and hold it away from your body. Set your lighter on "low" flame.



- ▶ Soak cigarette butts and ashes in water before throwing them away. NEVER toss hot cigarette butts or ashes in the trash.

Be prepared for a fire:

- ▶ One of the best ways to protect yourself and your family is to have a working smoke alarm that can sound fast for both a fire that has flames, and a smoky fire that has fumes without flames. It is called a "Dual Sensor Smoke Alarm." A smoke alarm greatly reduces your chances of dying in a fire.
- ▶ Prepare an escape plan and practice it twice a year. Make sure everyone in your family knows at least two (2) escape routes from their bedrooms.



Visit www.usfa.fema.gov/smoking to view the U.S. Fire Administration's Smoking & Home Fires Campaign and to order campaign materials.

To learn more on how you can help prevent fires and fire deaths, please contact your local fire department's office phone number (not 911) or visit www.usfa.fema.gov.

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