

October is Fire Safety Awareness Month



In Washington State most fire deaths occur in the home. In 2005, there were 24,421 fires in Washington, 64 fire deaths and an estimated property loss of over \$143 million dollars. Most of these fires were preventable.

Fires are no accidents – many are predictable and preventable.

Fire Preparation:

Install smoke alarms: Always be sure to have smoke alarms outside all sleeping areas; in each bedroom and on every level of your home, including the basement. If you are hearing and/or vision impaired, be sure you have an appropriate smoke alarm. Test your smoke alarms monthly, and change the batteries once a year. A working smoke alarm can alert you to a fire; it gives you valuable time to escape and call for help.

Plan your escape: Know two ways out of every room in case your primary exit is blocked by smoke or flames. Choose a meeting place so you can be sure everyone is accounted for. If anyone is missing, let the fire department know as soon as possible. ***Do not go back inside.*** Practice your home escape plan twice a year and make sure that every family member participates.

Know all exits: If you live in an apartment building, count the number of doorways between your apartment and the two nearest exits. During a fire, you may have to escape in the dark. If your building has outside metal fire-escape stairs, ask your building's owner or landlord to show you how to use them. Be familiar with all exits, even windows.

Provide special arrangements: Remember to provide special arrangements for yourself or others with reduced mobility. A first floor bedroom might be better for persons that have difficulty with stairs.

Fire Prevention:

Prevention is the best way to keep safe from fire. Many people have saved their own lives, or the life of someone else, by following easy fire safety tips.

Never smoke while in bed or on medication that makes you drowsy: Have large deep ashtrays and fill ashtrays with water before emptying them in a safe place. Check upholstered furniture for dropped matches or cigarettes.

Be attentive when you cook: Never leave cooking unattended. Wear clothes with tight-fitting sleeves when you cook. If a pan containing food catches fire, slide a lid over the pan, then turn off the burner. Keep stove surfaces free of clutter and grease buildup.

Give space heaters space: Be sure space heaters are at least three feet away from everything, including you. A slight brush against a space heater could start your clothing on fire.



In Case of Fire:

Test the door: Test the door with the back of your hand. If hot, use your second exit. If not, open the door carefully, and be ready to close it if heat or smoke rushes in.

Crawl low under smoke: Smoke rises while clean air stays low, near the floor. Crawl on the floor, maintaining contact with the walls as you go to the nearest exit. If you are unable to crawl, stay near the floor for clean air, and protect yourself as if you were trapped.

Get out, stay out: Exit as quickly as you can. Go to a neighbor's and call the fire department. ***Do not go back inside.***

Remain calm if trapped: Close doors between you and smoke. If there is a phone, call the fire department and tell the dispatcher exactly where you are in the building. Stuff cracks and cover vents to keep smoke out. Wait at a window; signal the firefighters by waving a light colored cloth or flashlight and wait to be rescued.

Stop, drop, and roll: If your clothes catch on fire, stop where you are, drop gently to the floor or ground, cover your face with your hands to protect your face from flames, and roll over backwards and forward to smother the flames. If you cannot drop to the floor, smother the flames with a blanket or towel.

