

Fire

Every day Americans experience the horror of fire. But most people don't understand fire. Only when we know the true nature of fire can we prepare our co-workers and ourselves. Each year more than 4,000 Americans die and more than 25,000 are injured in fires, many of which could be prevented.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA), a division of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), believes that teaching people the basic facts about fire can reduce fire deaths. Below are some simple facts that explain the particular characteristics of fire.

Fire is Fast!

There is little time!

In less than 30 seconds a small fire can get completely out of control and turn into a major fire. It only takes minutes for thick black smoke to fill a home/business. Most fires occur in the home/business when people are asleep. If you wake up to a fire, you won't have time to grab valuables because fire spreads quickly and the smoke is too thick. There is only time to escape.

Fire is HOT!

Heat is more threatening than flames.

A fire's heat alone can kill. Room temperatures in a fire can be a 100 degrees at floor level and rise to 600 degrees at eye level. Inhaling this super hot air will scorch your lungs. This heat can melt clothes to your skin. In five minutes a room can get so hot that everything ignites at once: this is called flashover.

Fire Safety Check List

Introduction:

America's fire death rate is one of the highest per capita in the industrialized world. Fire kills over 4,000 and injures more than 23,000 people each year. Firefighters pay a high price for this terrible record as well; approximately 100 firefighters die in the line of duty each year. Most of these losses can be prevented!

We have compiled fire safety information from sources with this common goal in mind: To reduce human and economic losses due to fire and related emergencies.

Exposing an Invisible Killer:

The dangers of Carbon Monoxide

Each year in America, carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning claims more than 200 lives and sends another 10,000 people to the hospital emergency rooms for treatment.

UNDERSTANDING THE RISK

What is Carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless and toxic gas. Because it is impossible to see, taste or smell the toxic fumes, CO can kill you before you are aware it is in your home/business. At lower levels of exposure, CO causes mild health effects that are often mistaken for the flu. These symptoms include (check all that apply):

- headaches
- dizziness
- disorientation
- nausea
- fatigue

The effects of CO exposure can vary greatly from person to person depending on age, overall health and the concentration and length of exposure.

Where does carbon monoxide come from?

CO gas can come from several sources:

- gas-fired appliances
- charcoal grills
- wood-burning furnaces
- fireplaces
- motor vehicles

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR COWORKERS FROM CO POISONING

Install at least one UL (Underwriters Laboratories) listed carbon monoxide alarm with an audible warning signal near the home/business working area. Carbon monoxide alarms measure the levels of CO over time and are designed to sound an alarm before an average, healthy adult would experience symptoms. It is very possible that you may not be experiencing symptoms when you hear the alarm. This does not mean that CO is not present.

Have a qualified professional check all:

- fuel burning appliances
- furnaces
- venting

___chimney systems at least once a year.

FIRE RELATED HAZARDS PRESENT DURING OR AFTER A WINTER STORM:

___Alternative heating devices used incorrectly create fire hazards.

___Damaged or downed utility lines can present a fire and safety hazard.

___Water damaged appliances, computers and utilities can be electrically charged.

___Frozen water pipes can burst and cause a safety hazards.

___Leaking gas lines, damaged or leaking gas propane containers, and leaking vehicle gas tanks might explode or ignite.

___Generators are often used during power outages. Generators that are not properly used and maintained can be very hazardous.

CHEMICAL SAFETY:

___Look for combustible liquids like gasoline, lighter fluid, and paint thinner that may have spilled. Thoroughly clean the spill and place containers in well-ventilated area.

___Keep combustible liquids away from heat sources.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY:

___If you home business has sustained flood or water damage, and you can safely get to the main breaker or fuse box, turn off the power.

___Assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged. This includes cable TV and computer feeds.

___Look for and replace frayed or cracked extension and appliance cords, loose prongs, and plugs.

___Exposed outlets and wiring could present a fire and life safety hazard.

___Appliances that emit smoke or sparks should be repaired or replaced.

___Have a licensed electrician check your home/business for damage.

GAS SAFETY:

___Smell and listen for leaky gas connections. If you believe there is a gas leak, immediately leave the home/business and leave the door(s) open.

___Never strike a match. Any size flame can spark an explosion.

___Before turning the gas back on, have the gas system checked by a professional.

GENERATOR SAFETY:

___Follow the manufacturer's instructions and guide lines when using generators.

___Use a generator or other fuel-powered machines outside the home/business. CO fumes are odorless and can quickly overwhelm you indoors.

___Use the appropriate sized and type power cords to carry the electrical load. Over loaded cords can overheat and cause fires.

____ Never run cords under rugs or carpets where heat might build up or damage to a cord unnoticed.

____ Never connect generators to another power source such as power lines. reverse flow of electricity or "backfeed" can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.

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