

# Important Fire Prevention Lessons

By Michael Rudeen



Fire is one of the most serious dangers in the home, and the kitchen presents the greatest risk. But wherever a fire starts, there are steps you can take to reduce the danger and help keep your family safe.

**Stay in the kitchen.** If you are frying, grilling, or broiling food, stay in the kitchen. If you're simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling, check the kitchen regularly. Keep things that can catch fire away from the stovetop, and have a lid handy to smother small grease fires.

**Install smoke alarms.** Smoke alarms are advisable in every bedroom, outside the sleeping area, and on every level of the home. Test smoke alarms monthly and replace them after 10 years.

**Smoke safely.** If you smoke, go outside. Keep smoking materials out of the reach of children and use a deep, sturdy ashtray away from anything that can burn. Don't discard cigarettes in vegetation that could ignite easily.

**Extinguish candles.** Make sure candles are always extinguished when you leave the room or go to bed. Keep them at least a foot from anything that can burn, and never leave children alone with a burning candle. If you use candleholders, make sure they won't tip easily.

**Maintain safe distances.** Keep anything that can burn at least three feet from your furnace or any other heating unit. Maintain a three-foot kid-free zone around open fires and space heaters, and never use your oven to heat your home.

**Practice your escape plan.** Make a home escape plan and practice it regularly. Know at least two ways out of every room and specify an outside meeting place. If you have a fire, leave immediately, closing doors behind you to contain it.

