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# THE NORTH COUNTRY **HEALTH** EFFECT

A health & safety guide brought to you by the Clinton County Health Department.



**Fire & home safety**

If a fire starts in your home, you may have as little as two minutes to escape. During a fire, early warning from a working smoke alarm and having a fire escape plan that has been practiced regularly can save lives.

## Prepare your home

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and outside every sleeping area.
- Install a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm on every level of your home and in a central location outside each separate sleeping area.
- Make sure your house number is easily readable from the street, even at night.
- Make sure your home heating sources are clean and in working order. Many home fires are started by poorly maintained furnaces or stoves, cracked or rusted furnace parts, or chimneys with soot buildup.
- Only use kerosene heaters if permitted by law. Only refuel kerosene heaters outdoors and after they have cooled.
- Check electrical wiring in your home. Fix or replace frayed extension cords, exposed wires, or loose plugs. Make sure wiring is not under rugs, held by nails, or in high traffic areas. Make sure electrical outlets have cover plates and no exposed wiring. Avoid overloading outlets or extension cords.
- Purchase only appliances and electrical devices (including space heaters) with a label from an independent testing laboratory.
- Store flammable materials in open areas at least 3 feet away from heat sources. Place rags used to apply flammable household chemicals in metal containers with tight-fitting lids.

## Prepare your family

1. **Install the right number of smoke alarms.** Test them once a month. If your alarm uses replaceable batteries, do so every 6 months.
2. **Teach children what smoke alarms sound like** and what to do when they hear one.
3. **Ensure that all household members know two ways to escape from every room** of your home and know the family meeting spot outside of your home.
4. **Establish a family emergency communications plan** and ensure that all household members know who to contact if they cannot find one another.
5. **Practice escaping from your home at least twice a year.** Press the smoke alarm test button or yell “Fire” to alert everyone that they must get out.
6. **Make sure everyone knows how to call 9-1-1.**
7. **Teach household members to STOP, DROP and ROLL** if their clothes catch on fire.

## Make & practice a home fire escape plan

Your entire family should practice your escape plan twice a year. Visit <https://rdcrss.org/20snuLN> or scan the QR code to learn what should be included and to download a template your family can fill out together.



## Smoke and CO alarms

Smoke and CO alarms that are properly installed and maintained play a vital role in reducing deaths and injuries. However, many children will not wake when an alarm sounds. Be sure your family has a plan in place.

**Smoke alarms** should be installed on every level of the house, in every sleeping room, outside all sleeping areas, in a family room or den, in the basement, and at the bottom of each staircase. They should be mounted on a ceiling or high on the wall.

**CO alarms** should be installed outside each sleeping area, on every level of the home and in other locations where required by laws, codes or standards.

For added protection, interconnect all smoke and CO alarms. When one alarm sounds, they all sound. Interconnection can be done using hard-wiring or wireless technology.

Test batteries in alarms monthly and replace batteries every 6 months. Replace alarms according to manufacturers' recommendations, when they become inoperable, cease to operate as intended, or begin producing end-of-life signals. This is generally 10 years from the manufacture date.

## Practice fire safe habits

- Keep items that can catch on fire at least three feet away from anything that gets hot. This includes heaters, stoves, fireplaces, space heaters, etc.
- Talk to your children regularly about the dangers of fire, matches and lighters and keep them out of reach.
- Turn portable heaters off when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Use flashlights instead of candles when the power is out.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended, even for a minute.



## Know what to do if a fire starts

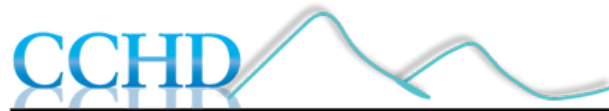
- Know how to safely operate a fire extinguisher.
- Remember to GET OUT, STAY OUT and CALL 9-1-1 or your local emergency phone number.
- Yell "Fire!" several times and go outside right away. If you live in a building with elevators, use the stairs. Leave all your things where they are and save yourself.
- If closed doors or handles are warm or smoke blocks your primary escape route, use your second way out. Never open doors that are warm to the touch.
- If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your exit. Close doors behind you.
- If smoke, heat or flames block your exit routes, stay in the room with doors closed. Place a wet towel or blanket under the door and call the fire department or 9-1-1. Open a window and wave a brightly colored cloth or flashlight to signal for help.
- Once you are outside, go to your meeting place and then send one person to call the fire department. If you cannot get to your meeting place, follow your family emergency communication plan.

## Guard against kitchen fires

- Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling or broiling food. Stay in the home while simmering, baking, roasting or boiling food.
- Keep pets off cooking surfaces and countertops.
- Keep the stove area clean and clear of things that can catch fire, such as pot holders, towels, curtains, bags, and other appliances.
- If you are cooking and a fire starts in a pan, slide a lid over the burning pan and turn off the burner. Leave the lid in place until the pan is completely cool. Moving the pan can cause serious injury or spread the fire. Never pour water on grease fires.



For more health & safety tips, visit [www.clintonhealth.org/nchealtheffect](http://www.clintonhealth.org/nchealtheffect) or scan the QR code.



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Information in this guide was adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)); the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH, [www.health.ny.gov](http://www.health.ny.gov)); and the American Red Cross ([www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)).

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