

# FIRE SAFETY

To protect you and your family from fires, it is important to understand that fires spread quickly. There may be no time to gather valuables or make a phone call - leave immediately and call 911 from a neighbor's home.

## Before a Fire Strikes

- ❑ Install smoke alarms. Working smoke alarms decrease your chances of dying in a fire by half.
- ❑ Smoke alarms should be placed on every level of your residence at the following locations:
  - Outside all bedrooms on the ceiling or high on the wall
  - At the top of open stairways or at the bottom of enclosed stairs
  - Near (but not in) the kitchen.
- ❑ Test and clean smoke alarms once a month and replace batteries during Daylight Savings Time.
- ❑ Meet with your family and plan two escape routes from every room in your home.
- ❑ Make sure windows are not nailed or painted shut and have a fire safety-opening feature so that evacuation is not delayed.
- ❑ Pick a predesignated place outside your home for your family to meet after escaping from a fire.
- ❑ Install A-B-C type fire extinguishers in the home and teach family members how to use them (*Type A*—wood or papers fires only; *Type B*—flammable liquid or grease fires; *Type C*—electrical fires; *Type A-B-C*—rated for all fires and recommended for the home).
- ❑ Teach children how to report a fire and when to use 911.
- ❑ For insurance purposes or claims, conduct an inventory of your property and possessions and keep the list in a separate location. Photographs and/or videos are also helpful.

## Check Electrical

- ❑ Have a professional electrician check the electrical wiring in your home.
- ❑ Make sure all outlets have cover plates and no wires are exposed.
- ❑ Inspect extension cords for frayed, exposed wires or loose plugs and do not overload extension cords or outlets. If you need to plug in two or three appliances, use a UL-approved unit with built-in circuit breakers to prevent sparks and short circuits.

## Check Flammable and Chemical Storage

- ❑ Store all flammable liquids in approved containers and store them in well-ventilated areas away from heating sources.
- ❑ Never smoke near flammable liquids.
- ❑ After use, safely discard all rags or materials that have been used for handling purposes.

## Check Heating Sources

- ❑ Have chimneys, wood stoves and all home heating systems inspected and cleaned annually by a certified specialist.
- ❑ Check with your local fire department for approved alternative heating sources, such as wood, coal and kerosene heaters and electrical space heaters. Use only in well-ventilated rooms.
- ❑ Fill kerosene heaters outside after they have cooled.
- ❑ Keep open flames away from walls, furniture, drapery and other flammable items.
- ❑ Do not use your oven as a home heating source.

## Check Candle and Cigarette Storage

- ❑ Keep matches and lighters up high, away from children and if possible, in a locked cabinet.
- ❑ Do not smoke in bed, especially when drowsy or medicated.
- ❑ Douse cigarette and cigar butts with water before disposal.
- ❑ Keep all candles safely secured and away from walls, furniture, drapery, other flammable items, pets and especially children.

## During a Fire

- ❑ Do not try to put out a fire, get everyone out of the residence and call 911 from a neighbor's residence.
- ❑ Check all doors before opening for heat, flames or smoke on the other side.
- ❑ Be prepared to crawl. Smoke and heat rise so stay low to the floor when escaping.
- ❑ Close doors behind you as you escape to delay the spread of the fire.
- ❑ If your clothes catch on fire, stop, drop and roll until the fire is extinguished. Running only makes the fire burn faster.

## After a Fire

- ❑ Do not enter a fire-damaged building until approved to do so by authorities.
- ❑ Call your insurance agent:
  - Make a list of damage and losses. Pictures and/or videos are helpful.
  - Keep records of clean-up and repair costs. Receipts are important for both insurance and income tax claims.
  - Do not throw away any damaged goods until an official inventory has been taken. Your insurance company takes all damages into consideration.
- ❑ If you are a tenant, contact the landlord.
- ❑ Discard food, beverages and medicines that have been exposed to heat, smoke or soot.

**To learn more about Fire Safety and the Safe Asleep Program please contact the Bridgeport Fire Department at 203.337.2070 or 203.335.8835**