

## MAJOR CAUSES OF HOME FIRES

**KITCHEN:** Do not leave cooking unattended. Use oven mitts, and don't wear loose clothing with long sleeves when cooking. Check for damaged or cracked cords on kettles and toasters and have their internal thermostats check if they have been dropped or damaged. Buy appliances that shut off automatically. Use a kitchen timer to remind yourself to turn off burners and the oven. If a pan of food catches fire, using a pot holder, carefully slide a lid over the pan and turn off the burner; do not attempt to move the pan! Keep the stove top and over clean and clear at all times. Don't cook if you are impaired by alcohol, medication or drugs which make you drowsy. Wood stoves - Have these installed by a qualified installer.

**LIVING ROOM:** Provide fire screens for fireplaces as flying coals or sparks can easily start a fire. Do not use extension cords in place of permanent wiring. Provide sufficient electrical outlets for your needs. If there are smokers in your home, check the furniture for fallen cigarettes or embers before you leave the room. A cigarette can smolder undetected beneath a cushion for several hours before it bursts into flames. Use large, deep ashtrays. Safety ashtrays with a double rim and deep centers are best. Never leave a lit cigarette unattended in an ashtray.

**BEDROOM:** All electrical appliances in use in the bedroom should be checked regularly for safe operation, this includes electric blankets and heating pads. If clothes are ironed in the bedroom, ensure the plug is pulled when finished and consider using an iron with an automatic shutoff. A smoke alarm should be installed in every bedroom due to the fact that there are electrical appliances in most bedrooms today.

**BASEMENT AND ATTIC:** Remove all unnecessary combustibles from the basement and attic areas. Have a maintenance person check all furnace safety controls, chimney and flue connections for leaks. Clean the furnace at least once a year. Remove flammable liquids from the house. Have your wiring checked periodically. Never store gasoline in basements, pits or other confined areas. Gasoline must be stored in areas that are well ventilated, free from ignition sources and only in areas permitted by the National Fire Code of Canada. Never store gasoline in glass or unapproved plastic containers or in metal cans with any plastic parts. Use only an approved portable container to transport and store gasoline. Replacing an old furnace or poor wiring for an electrical heating system can be costly. Consult a heating expert to determine what system will be most economical, efficient and safe for your home.

**GARAGE & WORKSHOP:** Most garages and workshops contain flammable materials such as thinners, gasoline, paints and industrial cleaners. They should be properly covered, stored neatly, and kept away from ignition sources such as space heaters. Paper products and wood shavings are also combustible. Keep your work area clean. Do not give fire a place to start. Do not leave matches and lighters lying around. It is unwise to smoke in areas that often contain flammable products. Have a proper fire extinguisher handy, and know how to use it. Keep it properly maintained so it will work in an emergency. Never store gasoline in glass or unapproved plastic containers or in metal cans with any plastic parts. Use only approved portable containers to store and transport gasoline.

**SMOKING:** Never smoke in bed or when your faculties are impaired by the use of medication, alcohol or drugs. Supervision is important for someone who is on medication and may become confused or drowsy. Every room where people smoke should have a smoke alarm and the battery should be tested regularly. The bedroom should be off-limits to smoking except, perhaps, in the case where an elderly family member who can't leave their bedroom wishes to smoke, and they should do so only under supervision.