

FALL SAFETY TIPS

REVIEW SAFETY FEATURES

At least once a year, do a top-to-bottom review of your home's safety features. This is also a good time to get the family together for a review of your fire evacuation plan. Here's how to do this:

SMOKE & C.O. DETECTORS: Replace the batteries in each smoke and carbon monoxide (C.O.) detector, then vacuum them with a soft brush attachment. Test the detectors by pressing the test button or holding a smoke source (like a blown-out candle) near the unit. If you haven't already, install a smoke detector on every floor of your home, including the basement.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS: Every home should have at least one fire extinguisher rated for all fire types (look for an A-B-C rating on the label). At a minimum, keep one near the kitchen; having one per floor isn't a bad idea. Annually, check the indicator on the pressure gauge to make sure the extinguisher is charged. Make certain that the lock pin is intact and firmly in place, and check that the discharge nozzle is not clogged. Clean the extinguisher and check it for dents, scratches, and corrosion. Replace if the damage seems severe. Note: Fire extinguishers that are more than six years old should be replaced. Mark the date of purchase on the new unit with a permanent marker.

FIRE ESCAPE PLANS: Every bedroom, including basement bedrooms, should have two exit paths. Make sure windows aren't blocked by furniture or other items. Ideally, each upper-floor bedroom should have a rope ladder near the window for emergency exits. Review what to do in case of fire, and arrange a safe meeting place for everyone away from the house.

GENERAL CLEANUP: Rid your home of accumulations of old newspapers and leftover hazardous household chemicals. (Check with your state or local Environmental Protection Agency about the proper way to discard dangerous chemicals.) Store flammable materials and poisons in approved, clearly labeled containers. Keep a clear space around heaters, furnaces, and other heat-producing appliances.



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