

National Fire Prevention Week home safety tips from PPL Electric Utilities

Heating sources, electric equipment among top causes of home fires

More fires occur during the winter months than any other time, and steps taken during October can help keep you safe at home.

Oct. 3-9 marks National Fire Prevention Week with the theme, “Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With.” This year’s campaign is designed to educate people about the importance of smoke alarms, and encourages everyone to take the steps necessary to update and maintain their home smoke alarm protection.

A home fire is reported every 81 seconds in the United States, and home fires kill about eight people every day, according to the [National Fire Protection Association](#). Most home fires start in the kitchen. After cooking and smoking, the most common causes of home fires are heating sources and electrical equipment.

[Fire Prevention Week](#) isn’t just about fire safety. It’s also a tribute to the men and women who keep our communities safe from fire all year long.

[PPL Electric Utilities](#) offers the following fire safety tips to help you and your family to stay safe:

- Have your home heater cleaned and inspected at least every other year to ensure safe, efficient operation, and keep the area around the heater clean at all times. An inspection by a qualified contractor can help ensure the heater vent or flue is not blocked, a common problem leading to carbon monoxide poisoning and fires.
- Make sure there is sufficient space between heating equipment, such as free-standing space heaters, and combustibles like furniture and drapes.
- Never leave an operating portable heater unattended, especially when there are children or pets nearby, or when you are sleeping.
- Take time to inspect electrical equipment around your home. Look for any loose or frayed cords on all electrical appliances. Avoid running extension cords across doorways or under carpets.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets. Use only one appliance for each receptacle when possible.
- Have plastic covers on all unused electrical outlets in homes with young children.
- Place lamps on level surfaces, away from things that can burn. Use only bulbs that match the lamp’s recommended wattage.

A small percentage of all home fires are caused by candles, with most being used in the bedroom. Seventy percent of households use candles. Lit candles should never be left unattended, and candles should always be kept out of the reach of children and pets. Make sure candles are on a firm base so they will not tip over, and avoid placing candles near curtains, furniture and other flammable materials.

In addition to fire prevention, fire experts advise that all homes should be equipped with smoke alarms or detectors, fire extinguishers, carbon monoxide detectors, and home sprinkler systems when possible.

Families should check smoke detector batteries once a month, replace the batteries once a year, and occasionally dust the inside of the unit to prevent false alarms. Fire officials say properly installed and maintained smoke alarms play a vital role in reducing fire deaths and injuries.

- Having a working smoke alarm cuts the chances of dying in a fire in half.
- A recent survey found that nearly all U.S. households had at least one smoke alarm, yet smoke alarms were not present or not operational in 2 out of 5 reported home fires.

- Almost two-thirds of reported home fire deaths occurred in homes without smoke alarms or without working smoke alarms.
- In more than half of the home fires in which the smoke alarms did not operate, the batteries were missing or disconnected.

Families need to plan fire escape routes in case of an emergency and practice the routes with all members of the household – especially children.

Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the 1871 Great Chicago Fire that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres. The fire began on Oct. 8, but continued to burn and did most of its damage on Oct. 9.

PPL Electric Utilities, a subsidiary of PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL), provides electric delivery services to about 1.4 million customers in Pennsylvania and has consistently ranked among the best companies for customer service in the United States. More information is available at www.pplelectric.com.

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