

## How to Work Towards Extinguishing the Risk of Fire in Your Home

In Canada, a residential fire is reported every 30 minutes. \* Prevent a fire in your home and keep your family safe by learning about the causes of house fires and how you can avoid common, but potentially deadly, mistakes.

Have you ever:

- Left a pot unattended on the stove...even for a minute?
- Allowed candles to burn after you left the room?
- Forgot to clean out the lint screen in your dryer?
- Set a portable heater too close to something that could burn?
- Stored paint or combustible materials too close to the furnace?
- Covered an extension cord with a rug?
- Smoked while you were sleepy or intoxicated?

If you answered “yes”, you are literally “playing with fire”. The following tips can reduce your chances of falling victim to a house fire:

**Smoke Alarms:** Install one on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas. For added protection, install one in every bedroom, especially if someone sleeps with the bedroom door closed. Change the batteries in your smoke alarms at least annually (or when the clocks change for daylight savings time) or whenever the low battery warning sounds. Test all smoke alarms monthly.

**Fire Extinguishers:** Cooking mishaps are the leading cause of home fires. Pay attention while you cook and always keep a proper fitting lid nearby. If a pot on the stove catches fire, carefully slide the lid over the pot and turn off the stove. It is also a good idea to have a fire extinguisher clearly located by an exit. Learn how to use it in an emergency.

**Smoking:** In the case of residential fires where there is a fatality, smoking is the ignition source of 30% of these fires.\* This fact is particularly astonishing as these fires are categorized as preventable. Always use deep ashtrays when smoking to keep ashes contained. Also, make sure there are working smoke alarms on every level, to detect a fire quickly if one starts. All matches and lighters should be kept out of sight and reach of children, preferably in a locked cabinet.

**Flammables:** Keep paints, solvents and flammable liquids tightly sealed in their original containers, away from heat and ignition sources. Use gasoline as a motor fuel only and store it in an outside shed.

**Electrical:** Use only electrical appliances, fixtures and cords bearing the CSA or ULC label. Unplug appliances when not in use. Avoid using extension cords as permanent wiring. They are for temporary use only.

**Escape Plan:** You may have very little time to safely escape a fire. Walk through the house with every member of your family and identify all possible exits and escape routes. Assign someone to assist children and older adults. Then, choose an outside meeting place that is a safe distance from your home. Twice a year, practice your plan in a realistic fashion, including crawling on your hands and knees. Remember, if a fire breaks out, evacuate your family and call the fire department or 911.

**For more information on home & auto insurance, call a CUMIS Insurance licensed insurance representative at 1-800-810-2847 to receive a free no-obligation quote in minutes.**

CUMIS® is a trademark of CUMIS Insurance Society, Inc. and is used under license. Insurance is underwritten by CUMIS General Insurance Company.

*\*[www.town.grimsby.on.ca](http://www.town.grimsby.on.ca)*

*Source: The Office of the Fire Marshal of Ontario, 2002 - 2006*