

Prevent Home Fires

The Burn Center at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center is one of only three burn centers in Northern California. Each year the Burn Center staff cares for hundreds of people injured by burns. Their expert and dedicated care saves lives. You can help by taking doing these 10 things and stop a fire in your home before it starts.

10 Things You Can Do to Make Your Home Safer

1. **Kitchen Safety** – Never leave a cooking pot or pan alone. Keep your cooking areas clean and not cluttered. Don't cook when you're sleepy or drowsy.
2. **Space Heaters** - Keep all space heaters at least three (3) feet away from anything that can burn.
3. **Smoking** – Never smoke in bed or when you're sleepy. Use large ashtrays that won't tip over. Soak butts and ashes before you dump them in a wastebasket.
4. **Matches and Lighters** – Store matches and lighters locked up and high away from children.
5. **Electricity** – Keep electrical cords out of walking areas and don't risk breaking the wires by pinching them behind furniture or stretching them around corners.
6. **Candles** – Keep candles away from anything that can burn. Put them out when you leave the room or go to sleep. Use a stable candle holder that cannot catch on fire.
7. **Plan Your Escape** – Make a home fire escape plan and hold fire drills at least twice a year. Make sure everyone in your house knows what to do in a fire emergency.
8. **Crawl Under Smoke** – If you have to escape a fire and there's smoke, crawl low on your hands and knees. Keep you head one to two feet above the floor where the air is cleaner.
9. **Install Smoke Alarms** – Put them on every floor of your home and near or inside all sleeping areas. Make sure everyone knows the sound of the alarm.
10. **Test the Alarm** – Tests alarms once a month and replace batteries at least once a year, or sooner if the alarm 'chirp' tells you the battery is low. Replace any smoke alarm that is more that 10 years old.

The three major causes of fires in the home are cooking, heating equipment and careless smoking. Each year home fires cause thousands of deaths and injuries, and millions of dollars in property loss. Most of these home fires can be prevented. It's important to do everything you can to stop fires before they start.