



SAFE@HOME

SAFETY MOMENT

Protecting You and Yours In and From Your Home™

Fire!

By Randy DeVaul

It is time to change the clocks and check those batteries in your smoke detectors. If you fail to change your clocks, you might not show up at the right time. If you fail to change your smoke detector batteries, you might not show up at all!

Fires are the third leading cause of accidental death, so protecting you and your family from such a tragedy is necessary. As you set your clocks and check your batteries, take just a few extra minutes and check for these fire prevention conditions in your home.

I hope you have smoke detectors so there are batteries to check. They are not expensive and strategically placing two or three throughout the house make good sense. There should be at least one on every floor of the house and, at the very least, one in the hall near the bedrooms and one near your kitchen. The kitchen detector is important, especially if someone turns meal preparation time into burnt sacrificial offerings.

While in the kitchen, check (or purchase) a small fire extinguisher rated for grease fires. It is easy to become distracted while cooking between the phone, the kids, the pets, the neighbors, or simply reading the recipe for the next ingredient. If the extinguisher is more than a couple years old, you may want to replace it.

Have you checked the lint trap in your dryer lately? The lint trap filter should be pulled and cleaned after every couple of uses of the dryer to prevent dangerous build-up of lint. And, it only takes a few seconds to do it.

Make sure your fireplace and chimney are clean from soot and other partially-burned material. If you haven't checked your flue in a while, you may also end up with the fresh-grilled aroma of wildlife that moved in during the off-season.

Don't mix wood logs with commercial chemical logs since popping of hot embers and potential explosion of material can occur. Don't burn wrapping paper or color-coated catalog pages. Not only can they cause a rapid flare-up of flame, but they also give off dangerous toxic fumes and smoke.

Kerosene and other types of heaters should be away from other things that burn, such as wall paper, drapes and curtains, upholstered furniture, and electrical cords. And of course, don't use gasoline in any of your heaters or fireplace!

If you smoke, quit! Yes, I know that is easier said than done. Burning cigars and cigarettes have burned many homes to the ground from ashes dumped in trash containers or falling on upholstered furniture. You see, dumped or fallen ashes do not immediately cool. The heat can work on other materials when smoldering. You go to bed or leave the room, and two hours later you have a fully-engulfed fire!

These suggestions only take seconds to check and doing so can save you and your family's life. Don't take your safety for granted. Take the time to be safe at home!