

# Mississippi



## **Guide to Fire Safety Education**

**July 9, 2014**

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# How to Use This Guide

The Guide to Fire Safety Education provides recommended fire safety education messages to ensure a consistent message is taught throughout the state. It is also meant to give helpful tips to the educator to ensure an effective presentation. Many of these tips come from the experience of many public educators before you and are tried and true. Those new to fire safety education as well as the seasoned fire safety educator will find this guide useful.

This guide is based on the recommended messages for fire prevention from the National Fire Protection Association, Educational Messages Advisory Committee. These messages are updated annually on NFPA's website ([www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)) based on recommendations from experienced educators and proven studies. There you will also find a wealth of educational tools and free fact sheets available for download that can be used as handouts. This guide will be updated after each annual release.

Each section targets a different age group. It is **NOT** intended that you cover all the messages listed for the age group during a single presentation. Consider the attention span of your target audience when preparing for a presentation. Time allowed for the presentation will also restrict the amount of information you can effectively present. It is recommended that you consult the person scheduling the presentation to assist with the decision of presentation length and content.

Each topic area is self-contained, written so that all the information needed on a certain subject and for a certain age group is provided within that category. As a result, some messaging may be repeated throughout the topic areas or age groups.

We recommend that you visit the Fire Safety Education Division section of the Mississippi Insurance Department State Fire Marshal's Office website for links of useful resources to supplement your presentations. Many of these resources are low cost or free.

Lastly, you are encouraged to join the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. Membership gives you access to a network of fire and life safety educators from across the state and access to a vast lending library. A membership application is included in this manual.

For additional information, contact:

Mississippi Insurance Department  
State Fire Marshal's Office  
Fire Safety Education Division  
P. O. Box 79  
Jackson, MS 39205  
888-900-7414  
[www.mid.state.ms.us](http://www.mid.state.ms.us)

# Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators

## Application for membership

(Please type or print legibly)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Prefer mailings sent to: \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Position (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (W) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

### General Members Only:

Many people are needed to make this organization a success. Would you be willing to serve on an association committee?

Please check all that are of interest to you:

\_\_\_\_\_ Legislative \_\_\_\_\_ Finance \_\_\_\_\_ Membership

\_\_\_\_\_ Education \_\_\_\_\_ Conference \_\_\_\_\_ Nominating

\_\_\_\_\_ Public Relations

### Membership Categories:

**General:** Those who are actively involved in public fire safety education or interested in the advancement of public fire safety education. **Annual Dues: \$10.00**

**Sustaining:** Any business or organization interested in the advancement of public fire safety education. **Annual Dues: \$100.00**

General Member.....Dues Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Sustaining Member....Dues Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

### Mail to:

Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators  
P. O. Box 973  
Ridgeland, MS 39158-0973

# Preschool

## Limit information

- **Keep the messages simple.**
- **Young children have a short attention span. Limit lessons to 10 minutes.**
- **Teach only one subject per session.**
- **Schedule additional visits to cover other messages.**

## 9-1-1

- Use 9-1-1 only for emergencies.
- In a fire emergency, always call 9-1-1 **after** you escape a burning building.
- Answer all questions you are asked.
- Stay on the phone until the 9-1-1 operator tells you to hang up.

## Tips

- Stress that 9-1-1 is only for emergencies. Give examples of emergencies and non-emergencies. Even then, children may “practice” calling 9-1-1 when they get home.
- Always tell the children to call nine-one-one; never tell the children to call nine eleven because there is no “11” button on the phone.
- Use a 9-1-1 simulator or unplugged phone to allow the children to practice. Even though the students may know the number, they may not know how to find the numbers on the phone. Explain that you are using a pretend phone to practice, and they should only call 9-1-1 if they have an emergency. Simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.
- Children need to learn their home address and phone number. Instruct teachers to send this message home to the caregivers.

## Smoke alarms

- Every home must have working smoke alarms.
- When you hear the sound of the smoke alarm, get out and stay out.
- If there is smoke, get low and go under the smoke.
- Go to your outside meeting place.

## Tips

- Some children may never have heard the sound of a smoke alarm. Test a smoke alarm so the children will know the sound.
- Warn the children that the sound will be loud. Suggest they cover their ears.

- You can hold the alarm next to your body or cover part of the alarm with your hand to reduce the volume in a class. Alternately, you may say, “The smoke alarm goes BEEP, BEEP, BEEP.” However, it is still wise to let them hear a smoke alarm at full volume during your presentation.

## Firefighters are friends

- Firefighters are our friends and helpers.
- Firefighters have special training that keeps them safe in a fire.
- Firefighters have special clothes that keep them safe in a fire.

### Tips

- Never tell children that the firefighters are **coming to get them**. This can make them fear the firefighter. It is best to say, “The firefighter will **help you get out**.”
- Show the children what the firefighter looks like when they fight a fire.
- If a child becomes fearful, have the teacher take them from the classroom. If you have time, you may contact the teacher to see if a face to face meeting without any gear on would help relieve some of the fear.
- Always use clean turnout gear. The toxins on dirty turnout gear are unsafe. It is best to have turnout gear that has never been in a fire (if possible).
- **NEVER enter the room fully dressed**. Always put turnout gear on in front of the children slowly. Remember, you are not responding to a fire; you are teaching children that firefighters are their friends.
- Explain each piece before putting it on.
- Allowing a teacher to dress in the gear may decrease the children’s fear.
- Never allow the children to put on adult turnout gear. It is too large for them and could hurt them, especially the helmet.
- Allowing the students to touch **CLEAN** items can calm their fears.
- Never force a fearful child to touch the firefighter or any other item they are fearful of.
- Relating the equipment to common items and explaining how it is different will calm some fears. (Ex. SCBA is like the backpack the children use except it has a tank that holds clean air for firefighters to breathe when in the smoke. The SCBA mask is like a Halloween mask except it keeps the firefighter’s face safe in a fire. It also helps them get the clean air from the tank.)
- Before putting on the SCBA, place the mask in front of your face and remove it a couple times to allow the children to see that it is still the same person.
- Breathe through the SCBA so the children will be familiar with the sound of the firefighter. You may relate this to Darth Vader.
- Remove the turnout gear in front of the children so they can see that is a person in the gear.
- Repeatedly reminding the children that this firefighter is their friend can help calm the children’s fears. (Say things like, “Firefighter John is almost ready to help you.”)

## **Tools not toys**

### **Hot things can hurt you**

- Briefly explain to the children what is hot and what is not. Also explain that some hot things can be cool. Give examples of each.
- Stay away from things that can get hot and can hurt you.
- These are tools for grown-ups, not toys for children:
  - ♦ Fire
  - ♦ Stove
  - ♦ Microwave
  - ♦ Iron
  - ♦ Curling iron
  - ♦ Heater
  - ♦ Fireplace
  - ♦ Grill
  - ♦ Matches
  - ♦ Lighters
  - ♦ Etc.

### **Tips**

- Fill a container with tools and toys. Include items that are not hot but may get hot. Ask a firefighter or other adult to sit on one side of you; ask a child to sit on the other side. As you remove each item from the container, ask the children to identify it as a tool or toy. Give the tools to the firefighter or other adult; give the toys to the child.

### **Hot things can hurt alternative**

A similar theme would be to focus on stay away from things that can get hot and can hurt you. This is very appropriate for preschool children. Show objects or photos of objects that are hot or could become hot and things that will not. Tell the children whether they are hot or cool. Then, ask the children whether they are hot or cool. Teach children to take three steps back from something that is “Hot”. Show the items again and have the children take three steps back from the “Hot” items and then return to their place when you put the item away. Have them sit when you show a “Cool” item.

## **Matches and lighters**

- Matches and lighters are tools for grown-ups not toys for children.
- If you find matches or lighters, leave them alone and tell a grown up right away.

## Tips

- Never use a match or lighter in front of children.
- Never give matches or lighters to the children.

## Fire extinguishers

- **Never teach children how to use a fire extinguisher.**
- **Never use fire extinguishers in front of children.**
- **Fire extinguisher demonstrations are not effective with children.**

## Tips & Techniques

- If possible, visit the classroom prior to the presentation. The children will become familiar with you and be less frightened of you. It is easier to keep their attention when they are in a small group.
- **Small Group vs Assembly:** Whenever possible, teach to small groups. Teaching small groups is more effective than large groups. There are fewer distractions for the students, and small groups allow more interaction with the students. A small group also gives more time for each student to demonstrate the skill you are teaching.
- **Get on their level.** Sit on the floor or in a chair to be at or near the children's eye level. This will not be possible with large groups because the children at the rear of the room will not be able to see you.
- **Teach the parents.** At this age, children are too young to escape on their own. Parents must be responsible for the children's safety. Parents must also be responsible for smoke alarm testing and maintenance. Send educational materials home to the parents and caregivers.
- **Children learn from repetition.**
  - ♦ Repeat the message at least three times.
  - ♦ Have the students repeat a new concept or new word.
  - ♦ It is also a good idea to review with the children by asking questions about the lessons to ensure they learned correctly.
- **Use positive language.** When possible, do not tell them what not to do. At this age, children do not always understand "not". Ex. If you tell a child "do not touch matches", they only understand "touch the matches". It is better to tell them "if you find matches, leave them alone". If you tell a child "do not hide", they only hear "hide". It is better to tell them "get outside".
- **Never force children to do things they are afraid to do.**
- **Keep messages simple.**
  - ♦ Keep lessons short. Give the children plenty opportunity to move around. When they become restless, it is time to switch activities.
  - ♦ Never use big words. Ex. When showing the fire truck, children do not understand "the truck holds 1,250 gallons of water". At this age they do not know what a gallon is, nor do they understand how much 1,250 is. It is better to say, "There is enough water in the truck to fill a swimming pool." Instead of saying "SCBA" or "self-

- contained breathing apparatus”, say air bottle or air tank. When it is necessary to use a big word, give a simple definition. Ex. “Emergency” is a big word that means you need the fire department, police department, or ambulance really fast.
- ♦ It is best to cover only one message during a visit when teaching these children. They likely cannot comprehend more than one message during a visit.
  - **Answer all questions you are asked.** If you don’t know the answer, “I don’t know, but I will find out,” is a good answer. Remember to follow up with the answer.
  - **Never allow the children to operate the hose.** Some experts believe that this confuses the children. You have just taught them to get out of a fire, but they now think that they should spray water on fire because you have taught them how to use the hose. **Never allow children to extinguish a fire.**
  - **Props**
    - ♦ Use props such as a black sheet (smoke) and tree (meeting place) to allow the children to practice a fire drill in the classroom. Small doors and windows can be made out of cardboard or donated by a local home improvement store. Red felt “flames” can be used when demonstrating stop, drop, and roll; they easily fall off clothes to help them understand to roll until the fire is out.
    - ♦ The State Fire Marshal’s Office has a Fire Safety House, a mobile unit that simulates the kitchen and bedroom of a house. Equipped with heated doors, smoke alarms, sprinkler heads, smoking appliances, and a fire escape ladder it is used to teach audiences of all ages exit drills, smoke alarm use and maintenance, the proper way to exit a burning house, and fire extinguisher use. For more information or to schedule an event with the Fire Safety House, please contact the Fire Safety Education Division at 888-900-7414.
    - ♦ The Sparky’s Hazard House is a dollhouse-like tabletop prop that can be used to teach hazards in the home. It is available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.
    - ♦ 9-1-1 simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.

# Kindergarten-2nd grade

## 9-1-1

- Use 9-1-1 only for emergencies.
- In a fire emergency, always call 9-1-1 **after** you escape a burning building.
- Answer all questions you are asked.
- Stay on the phone until the 9-1-1 operator tells you to hang up.

### Tips

- Stress that 9-1-1 is only for emergencies. Give examples of emergencies and non-emergencies. Even then, children may “practice” calling 9-1-1 when they get home.
- Always tell the children to call nine-one-one; never tell the children to call nine eleven because there is no “11” button on the phone.
- Use a 9-1-1 simulator or unplugged phone to allow the children to practice. Explain that you are using a pretend phone to practice, and they should only call 9-1-1 if they have an emergency. Simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.
- Children need to learn their home address and phone number. Instruct teachers to send this message home to the caregivers.

## Smoke alarms

- Every home must have working smoke alarms.
- Have smoke alarms in and near the bedrooms where you can hear them when you sleep especially if you sleep with your bedroom door closed.
- When you hear the smoke alarm, get out and stay out.
- Go to your outside meeting place.

### Tips

- Explain to the children that our noses go to sleep when we go to sleep. We need a smoke alarm to smell for the smoke and let us know if there is a fire.
- Some children may never have heard the sound of a smoke alarm. Test a smoke alarm so the children will know the sound.
- Warn the children that the sound will be loud. Suggest they cover their ears.
- You can hold the alarm next to your body or cover part of the alarm with your hand to reduce the volume in a class. Alternately, you may say, “The smoke alarm goes BEEP, BEEP, BEEP.” However, it is still wise to let them hear it at full volume during your presentation.
- Tell them to ask a grown-up to test their smoke alarm at home once a month.

## Making a safe escape during a fire

- When a smoke alarm sounds, get out fast and stay out.
- If there is smoke, get low and go under the smoke.
- Know at least two ways out of every room. The door is the best way out. If the door is blocked by heat, smoke, or fire, use the window.
  - ♦ If you have a window air conditioner, make sure there is still a second way out of the room.
  - ♦ Before opening a door, feel the door and doorknob. If it is hot, use your second way out.
  - ♦ If the door is cool, open it a little to see if there is smoke and fire.
  - ♦ If you see smoke or fire, close the door and use your second way out.
  - ♦ If there is no smoke or fire, continue through the door closing it behind you.
- Go to your outside meeting place.
- Get out and stay out. Never go back inside for any reason.
- Practice the plan with everyone in your home twice a year and at least once at night with the lights off.
- Practice the plan with overnight guests.

### Tips

- The outside meeting place should be in front of the house away from the home where everyone will meet.
- If asked about bedrooms on the second or third level, explain that escape ladders can be purchased. They should only be used during an emergency.
- If asked about pets, instruct them to tell firefighters the pet may be trapped inside. Firefighters have special clothes that keep them safe while they search for a trapped pet; children do not have these special clothes.

## Firefighters are friends

- Firefighters are our friends and helpers.
- Firefighters have special training that keeps them safe in a fire.
- Firefighters have special clothes that keep them safe in a fire..

### Tips

- Never tell children that the firefighters are **coming to get them**. This can make them fear the firefighter. It is best to say, “The firefighter will **help you get out**.”
- Show the children what the firefighter looks like when they fight a fire.
- If a child becomes fearful, have the teacher take them from the classroom. Always use clean turnout gear. The toxins on dirty turnout gear are unsafe. It is best to have turnout gear that has never been in a fire (if possible).

- **NEVER enter the room fully dressed.** Always put turnout gear on in front of the children slowly. Remember, you are not responding to a fire; you are teaching children that firefighters are their friends.
- Explain each piece before putting it on.
- Allowing the teacher to dress in the gear may decrease the children's fear.
- Never allow the children to put on adult turnout gear. It is too large for them and could hurt them, especially the helmet.
- Allowing the students to touch **CLEAN** items can calm their fears.
- Never force a fearful child to touch the firefighter or any other item they are fearful of.
- Relating the equipment to common items and explaining how it is different will calm some fears. (Ex. SCBA is like the backpack the children use except it has a tank that holds clean air for firefighters to breathe when in smoke. The SCBA mask is like a Halloween mask except it keeps the firefighter's face safe in a fire. It also helps them get the clean air from the tank.)
- Before putting on the SCBA, place the mask in front of your face and remove it a couple times to allow the children to see that it is still the same person.
- Breathe through the SCBA so the children will be familiar with the sound of the firefighter. You may relate this to Darth Vader.
- Remove the turnout gear in front of the children so they can see that is a person in the gear.

## **Burns**

- Tell a grown-up right away.
- Cool a burn right away by putting it in cool water.
- Cool the burn for three to five minutes. Explain that this is a long time.
- Cover with a clean, dry cloth.

## **Matches and lighters**

- Matches and lighters are tools for grown-ups not toys for children.
- If you find matches and lighters, leave them alone and tell a grown up right away.

## **Tips**

- Never use a match or lighter in front of children.
- Never give matches or lighters to the children.

## **If you are on fire**

- If your clothes catch fire **STOP, DROP, AND ROLL.**
- Stop where you are.
- Drop to the ground.
- Cover your face with your hands

- Roll over and over or back and forth to put out the fire.
- Cool the burn right away by putting it in cool water for three to five minutes.

### Tips

- Explain that this is a long time.

## Fire extinguishers

- **Never teach children how to use a fire extinguisher.**
- **Never use fire extinguishers in front of children.**
- **Fire extinguisher demonstrations are not effective with children.**

### Tips & Techniques

- These children may still be too young to understand and comprehend more than one message during a visit. Use your judgment. If unsure, consult the teacher before the visit.
- **Small Group vs Assembly:** Whenever possible, teach to small groups. Teaching small groups is more effective than large groups. There are fewer distractions for the students, and small groups allow more interaction with the students. A small group also gives more time for each student to demonstrate the skill you are teaching.
- **Get on their level.** Sit on the floor or in a chair to be at the children's eye level. This may not be possible with large groups. The children at the rear of the room will not be able to see you.
- **Teach the parents.** At this age, children may still be too young to escape on their own. Parents must be responsible for the children's safety. Parents must also be responsible for smoke alarm testing and maintenance. Send educational materials home to the parents and caregivers.
- **Children learn from repetition.**
  - ♦ Repeat the message at least three times.
  - ♦ It is also a good idea to review with the children by asking questions about the lessons to ensure they learned correctly. Ex. If you teach home escape planning and stop, drop, and roll in the same visit ask, "What do you do when your house is on fire?" If the children respond, "Stop, drop, and roll", you know that you need to work with them a little more so they know the proper thing to do. This may also help you decide that you should not teach both messages in the same visit.
- **Use positive language.** When possible, do not tell them what not to do. At this age, children do not always understand "not". Ex. If you tell a child "do not touch matches", they only understand "touch the matches". It is better to tell them "if you find matches, leave them alone". If you tell a child "don't hide", they only hear "hide". It is better to tell them "get outside".
- **Never force children to do things they are afraid to do.**
- **Keep messages simple.**
  - ♦ Never use big words. Ex. When showing the fire truck, children do not understand "the truck holds 1,250 gallons of water". At this age they may not know what a gallon

is, nor understand how much 1,250 is. It is better to say, “There is enough water in the truck to fill a swimming pool.” Instead of saying “SCBA” or “self-contained breathing apparatus”, say air bottle or air tank. When it is necessary to use a big word, give a simple definition. Ex. “Emergency” is a big word that means you need the fire department, police department, or ambulance really fast.

- **Answer all questions you are asked.** If you don’t know the answer, “I don’t know, but I will find out,” is a good answer. Remember to follow up with the answer.
- **Never allow the children to operate the hose.** Some experts believe that this confuses the children. You have just taught them to get out of a fire, but they now think that they should spray water on fire because you have taught them how to use the hose. **Never allow children to extinguish a fire.**
- **Props**
  - ♦ Use props such as a black sheet (smoke) and tree (meeting place) to allow the children to practice a fire drill in the classroom. Small doors and windows can be made out of cardboard or donated by a local home improvement store. Red felt “flames” can be used when demonstrating stop, drop, and roll; they easily fall off clothes to help them understand to roll until the fire is out.
  - ♦ The State Fire Marshal’s Office has a Fire Safety House, a mobile unit that simulates the kitchen and bedroom of a house. Equipped with heated doors, smoke alarms, sprinkler heads, smoking appliances, and a fire escape ladder it is used to teach audiences of all ages exit drills, smoke alarm use and maintenance, the proper way to exit a burning house, and fire extinguisher use. For more information or to schedule an event with the Fire Safety House, please contact the Fire Safety Education Division at 888-900-7414.
  - ♦ The Sparky’s Hazard House is a dollhouse-like tabletop prop that can be used to teach hazards in the home. It is available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.
  - ♦ 9-1-1 simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.

# 3rd-5th grade

## 9-1-1

- Use 9-1-1 only for emergencies.
- In a fire emergency, always call 9-1-1 **after** you escape a burning building.
- Answer all questions you are asked.
- Stay on the phone until the 9-1-1 operator tells you to hang up.

### Tips

- Always tell the children to call nine-one-one; never tell the children to call nine eleven because there is no “11” button on the phone.
- Use a 9-1-1 simulator or unplugged phone to allow the children to practice calling 9-1-1. Simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.
- Children need to learn their home address and phone number. Instruct teachers to send this message home to the caregivers.

## Smoke alarms

- Every home must have working smoke alarms.
- Have smoke alarms in and near the bedroom where you can hear them when you sleep especially if you sleep with your bedroom door closed.
- When you hear the smoke alarm, get out and stay out.
- Go to your outside meeting place.

### Tips

- Some children may have never heard the sound of a smoke alarm. Test a smoke alarm so the children will know the sound.
- Tell them to ask a grown-up to test their smoke alarm.

## Making a safe escape during a fire

- When a smoke alarm sounds, get out fast and stay out.
- If there is smoke, get low and go under the smoke.
- Know at least two ways out of every room. The door is the best way out.
  - ♦ If you have a window air conditioner, make sure there is still a second way out of the room.
  - ♦ Before opening a door, feel the door and doorknob. If it is hot, use your second way out.
  - ♦ If the door is cool, open it a little to see if there is smoke and fire.

- ♦ If you see smoke or fire, close the door and use your second way out.
  - ♦ If there is no smoke or fire, continue through the door closing it behind you.
- Get out and stay out. Never go back inside.
- Go to your outside meeting place.
- Practice the plan with everyone in your home twice a year and at least once at night with the lights off.
- Practice the plan with overnight guests.

## Tips

- If asked about pets, instruct the children to tell firefighters the pet may be trapped inside. Firefighters have special clothes that keep them safe while they search for a trapped pet; children do not have these special clothes.
- The outside meeting place should be in front of the house away from the home where everyone will meet.
- If asked about bedrooms on the second or third level, explain that escape ladders can be purchased. They should only be used during an emergency.

## Firefighters are friends

- Firefighters are our friends and helpers.
- Firefighters have special training that keeps them safe in a fire.
- Firefighters have special clothes that keep them safe in a fire.

## Tips

- Show the children what the firefighter looks like when they fight a fire.
- If a child becomes fearful, have the teacher take them from the classroom.
- Never force a fearful child to touch the firefighter or any other item they are fearful of.
- Always use clean turnout gear. The toxins on dirty turnout gear are unsafe. It is best to have turnout gear that has never been in a fire (if possible).
- **NEVER enter the room fully dressed.** Always put turnout gear on in front of the children slowly. Remember, you are not responding to a fire; you are teaching children that firefighters are their friends.
- Explain each piece before putting it on.
- Allowing the teacher to dress in the gear may decrease the fear.
- Never allow the children to put on adult turnout gear. It is too large for them and could hurt them.
- Breathe through the SCBA so the children will be familiar with the sound of the firefighter. You may relate this to Darth Vader.
- Remove the turnout gear in front of the children.

## Burns

- Tell a grown-up right away.
- Cool a burn right away by putting it in cool water.
- Cool the burn for three to five minutes.
- Cover with a clean, dry cloth.

## Matches and lighters

- Matches and lighters are tools for grown-ups not toys for children.
- If you find matches and lighters, leave them alone and tell a grown up right away.
- Ask the grown-up to keep matches and lighters in a locked cabinet to keep you safe.

## Tips

- Never use a match or lighter in front of children.
- Never give matches or lighters to the children.

## If you are on fire

- If your clothes catch fire STOP, DROP, AND ROLL.
- Stop where you are.
- Drop to the ground.
- Cover your face with your hands
- Roll over and over or back and forth to put out the fire.
- Cool a burn right away by putting it in cool water for three to five minutes.

## Fire extinguishers

- **Never teach children how to use a fire extinguisher.**
- **Never use fire extinguishers in front of children.**
- **Fire extinguisher demonstrations are not effective with children.**

## Tips & Techniques

- **Small Group vs Assembly:** Whenever possible, teach in small groups. Teaching small groups is more effective than large groups. There are fewer distractions for the students, and small groups allow more interaction with the students. A small group also gives more time for each student to demonstrate the skill you are teaching.
- **Children learn from repetition.**
  - ♦ Repeat the message at least three times.
  - ♦ It is also a good idea to review with the children by asking questions about the lessons to ensure they learned correctly. Ex. If you teach home escape planning and stop, drop, and roll in the same visit ask, “What do you do when your house is on fire?” If the children respond, “Stop, drop, and roll”, you know that you need to work with

them a little more so they know the proper thing to do.

- **Never force children to do things they are afraid to do.**
- **Keep messages simple.** These children understand more complex words. When using these words, simply ensure that they understand what you are talking about. Ex. When showing the SCBA, explain that “SCBA” is a “self-contained breathing apparatus” which is an air bottle or air tank that holds clean air.
- **Never allow the children to operate the hose.** Some experts believe that this confuses the children. You have just taught them to get out of a fire, but they now think that they should spray water on fire because you have taught them how to use the hose. **Never allow them to extinguish a fire.**
- **Props**
  - ♦ Use props such as a black sheet (smoke) and tree (meeting place) to allow the children to practice a fire drill in the classroom. Small doors and windows can be made out of cardboard or donated by a local home improvement store. Red felt “flames” can be used when demonstrating stop, drop, and roll; they easily fall off clothes to help them understand to roll until the fire is out.
  - ♦ The State Fire Marshal’s Office has a Fire Safety House, a mobile unit that simulates the kitchen and bedroom of a house. Equipped with heated doors, smoke alarms, sprinkler heads, smoking appliances, and a fire escape ladder it is used to teach audiences of all ages exit drills, smoke alarm use and maintenance, the proper way to exit a burning house, and fire extinguisher use. For more information or to schedule an event with the Fire Safety House, please contact the Fire Safety Education Division at 888-900-7414.
  - ♦ The Sparky’s Hazard House is a dollhouse-like tabletop prop that can be used to teach hazards in the home. It is available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.
  - ♦ 9-1-1 simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.

# 6th-8th grade

## 9-1-1

- Use 9-1-1 only for emergencies.
- In a fire emergency, always call 9-1-1 **after** you escape a burning building.

### Tips

- Always tell the children to call nine-one-one; never tell the children to call nine eleven because there is no “11” button on the phone.
- Use a 9-1-1 simulator or unplugged phone to allow the children to practice calling. Simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.

### Information to give the emergency operator

- Stay calm.
- Tell the 9-1-1 operator what the emergency is.
- Tell the 9-1-1 operator the address of the emergency.
- Answer all questions you are asked.
- Stay on the phone until the 9-1-1 operator tells you to hang up.

## Smoke alarms

- Every home must have working smoke alarms.
  - Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a home fire in half.
- Have smoke alarms in and near the bedroom where you can hear them when you sleep especially if you sleep with your bedroom door closed.
- When you hear the smoke alarm, get out and stay out.
- Go to your outside meeting place.

### Tips

- Some children may never have heard the sound of a smoke alarm. Test a smoke alarm so the children will know the sound.

## Making a safe escape during a fire

- When a smoke alarm sounds, get out fast and stay out.
- If there is smoke, get low and go under the smoke.
- Know at least two ways out of every room. The door is the best way out. If the door is blocked by heat, smoke, or fire, use the window.

- ♦ If you have a window air conditioner, make sure there is still a second way out of the room.
- ♦ Before opening a door, feel the door and doorknob. If it is hot, use your second way out.
- ♦ If the door is cool, open it a little to see if there is smoke and fire.
- ♦ If you see smoke or fire, close the door and use your second way out.
- ♦ If there is no smoke or fire, continue through the door closing it behind you.
- Get out and stay out. Never go back inside for any reason.
- Go to your outside meeting place.
- Practice the plan with everyone in your home twice a year and at least once at night with the lights off.
- Practice the plan with overnight guests.

### Tips

- If asked about pets, instruct the children to tell firefighters the pet may be trapped inside. Firefighters have special clothes that keep them safe while they search for a trapped pet; children do not have these special clothes.
- The outside meeting place should be in front of the house away from the home where everyone will meet.
- If asked about bedrooms on the second or third level, explain that escape ladders can be purchased. They should only be used during an emergency.

## Firefighters are friends

**NOTE:** These children may be a little mature for this lesson. Consult the teacher prior to the presentation for advice.

- Firefighters are our friends and helpers.
- Firefighters have special training that keeps them safe in a fire.
- Firefighters wear special clothes that keep them safe in a fire

### Tips

- Show the children what the firefighter looks like when they fight a fire.
- Always use clean turnout gear. The toxins on dirty turnout gear are unsafe. It is best to have turnout gear that has never been in a fire (if possible).
- **NEVER enter the room fully dressed.** Always put turnout gear on in front of the children slowly. Remember, you are not responding to a fire; you are teaching children that firefighters are their friends.
- Explain each piece before putting it on.
- Allowing the teacher to dress in the gear may help keep the children's attention.
- Breathe through the SCBA so the children will be familiar with the sound of the firefighter. You may relate this to Darth Vader.
- Remove the turnout gear in front of the children.

## **If you are on fire**

- If your clothes catch fire, never run.
- Stop immediately.
- Drop to the ground.
- Cover your face with your hands.
- Roll over and over or back and forth to put out the fire.
- If you cannot stop, drop, and roll, keep a blanket or towel nearby to help you or others smother flames. Cover the person with a blanket to smother the fire. If you use a wheelchair, scooter, or other device and are able to get to the floor, lock the device first to stay in place before getting on the floor to roll until the flames are out.
- Cool a burn right away by putting it in cool water for three to five minutes.
  - ♦ Cover the burn with a clean, dry cloth.
  - ♦ Do not apply creams, ointments, sprays, or other home remedies.
  - ♦ Get medical help right away by calling 9-1-1.

## **Burns**

### **Prevent scalds and burns in the kitchen**

**NOTE:** This message should be taught to students that are babysitting younger children.

- Have a 3 foot kid and pet free zone around the stove
- Teach children that hot things burn.
- Place hot objects so they cannot be pulled down or knocked over.
- Turn pot handles away from the stove's edge.
- Keep appliance cords away from counter edges.
- Keep hot foods and liquids away from table and counter edges.
- Use dry oven mitts or potholders. Hot cookware or tableware can heat moisture in a hot pad resulting in (or causing) a scald burn.
- If you have young children in the home, cook on the stove's back burners.

### **Hot tap water and scald burns**

**NOTE:** This message should be taught to students that are babysitting younger children.

- Never leave the bathroom while the tub is filling.
- Before placing a child in the bath or getting into the tub yourself, test the water.
- Fill the tub or sink by running cool water first and then adding hot water. Turn hot water off first. Mix the water thoroughly and check the temperature by moving your hand, wrist, and forearm through the water. The water should feel warm to the touch.

- When bathing a young child, seat the child facing away from the faucets so the child cannot reach the faucet. Turn single-handled faucets to the “COLD” position.
- Never leave a child unattended in a tub of water.
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### **Treatment of burns**

- Cool a burn right away by putting it in cool water for three to five minutes.
- Cover with a clean, dry cloth. Do not apply creams, ointments, sprays, or other home remedies.
- Remove all clothing, diapers, jewelry, and metal from the burned area. These can hide underlying burns and retain heat, thereby increasing skin damage.
- Call 9-1-1 or see your doctor if the burn is:
  - ♦ on the face, hands, feet, major joints, or genital area and /or bigger than the injured person’s palm
  - ♦ white, tight, dry (leathery), or painless
  - ♦ caused by chemicals or electricity
  - ♦ causing difficulty breathing
- See a doctor as soon as possible if the burn:
  - ♦ does not heal in 2 to 3 days
  - ♦ becomes foul smelling
  - ♦ develops thick drainage, redness, or swelling
  - ♦ causes fever

### **Matches and lighters**

- Matches and lighters are tools for grown-ups not toys for children.
- If you find matches and lighters, leave them alone and tell a grown up right away.
- Ask the grown-up to keep matches and lighters in a locked cabinet to keep you safe.

### **Tips**

- Never use a match or lighter in front of children.
- Never give matches or lighters to the children.
- If these students care for younger children, they should put the matches or lighters away in a locked cabinet.

### **Cooking**

**NOTE:** These children should only cook with adult supervision; however, many of them may be babysitting and responsible for cooking. Speak with the teacher to determine if these messages are appropriate for the class you are teaching. It is safer for these children to use the microwave if it is appropriately placed at their level.

## **Stay alert**

- You must be alert when cooking. Do not cook if you are sleepy or drowsy from medicine, drugs, or alcohol. Remember that these children may have started experimenting with alcohol and/or drugs.

## **Watch what you heat**

- The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.

## **Keep things that can catch fire away from heat sources**

- Keep things that can catch on fire (oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels, or curtains) away from your stovetop.
- Do not store things that can catch on fire in an oven or toaster oven.
- Keep the stovetop, burners, and oven clean.
- Wear short, close-fitting, or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire if it comes in contact with a gas flame or an electric burner.

## **Keep kids and pets away from the cooking area**

- Have a “kid-free zone” of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.
- Never hold a child while you are cooking, drinking a hot liquid, or carrying hot foods or liquids.
- Keep pets off cooking surfaces and nearby countertops to prevent them from knocking things onto the burner.

## **Microwave ovens**

- Always supervise children when they are using the microwave oven.
- Use only microwave-safe cookware (containers or dishes). Never use aluminum foil or metal objects in a microwave oven.
- Open food cooked in the microwave slowly, away from the face. Hot steam escaping from a container of food cooked in the microwave or the food itself can cause burns.
- Never heat a baby bottle in a microwave oven because it heats liquids unevenly. Heat baby bottles in warm water from the faucet.
- If your microwave is mounted over your stove, use extra caution.

## What to do if you have a cooking fire

- Get out and stay out.
- Call 9-1-1.

## Tips

- Children should not try to fight the fire.

## Heating

**NOTE:** Many of these children may be babysitting. Speak with the teacher to determine if these messages are appropriate for the class you are teaching.

- Have a three-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- All heaters need space. Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Supervise children when open fires and space heaters are being used.
- Never use your oven or stove for heating. Ovens and stoves are not designed to heat your home.

## Portable space heaters

- Never leave space heaters unattended.
- Turn portable space heaters off and unplug them when you go to bed or leave the room.
- Place space heaters on a solid, flat surface away from high traffic areas and doorways.
- Plug space heaters directly into wall outlets with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord or power strip.
- Do not plug anything else into the same wall outlet as the one you are using for your space heater. This could result in overheating.
- Check often for a secure plug/outlet fit. If the plug does not fit snugly into the wall outlet or if the plug becomes very hot, the wall outlet may need to be replaced. Have a qualified electrician replace the wall outlet.
- Inspect for cracked, frayed, or broken cords. Check for damaged plugs or loose connections. If found, do not use.

## Clothes dryers

**NOTE:** Many of these children may be responsible for assisting with household chores. Speak with the teacher to determine if these messages are appropriate for the class you are teaching.

- Do not use the dryer without a lint filter.
- Clean the dryer’s lint filter before and after each load of laundry.

- Do not overload the dryer.
- Turn off the dryer when you leave home or go to bed.

## Fire extinguishers

**NOTE:** Teaching any non-professional to use fire extinguishers is not recommended. However, scout troops may require fire extinguisher training to receive a badge at this age. **Only teach fire extinguisher use if it is a requirement. Use extreme caution when teaching these children how to use a fire extinguisher; they may still be unable to comprehend proper extinguisher use.**

- Firefighting should be left to the fire department.
- Only use a fire extinguisher if you have been trained. Learn and practice how to use fire extinguishers **before** a fire occurs.
- Fire extinguishers have limits. Never try to extinguish a fire that is larger than a small trash can.
- Before trying to fight a fire, make sure everyone is leaving the house, someone is calling 9-1-1, you can get out, and you are using the proper fire extinguisher.
- If the fire does not go out after using one extinguisher, **GET OUT!**

## Tips

- **Never recommend fire extinguisher use unless you provide training.**

## Tips & Techniques

- **Attitudes**
  - ♦ Invite students' opinions, but do not engage in arguments. Ignore unpleasant body language indicating boredom or displeasure as long as it does not disrupt other students' learning.
  - ♦ Be cautious with humor. Children know when it is forced or unnatural.
  - ♦ Be a positive role model, but don't feel that you have to be the children's friend.
- **Children learn from repetition.**
  - ♦ Repeat the message at least three times.
  - ♦ It is also a good idea to review with the children by asking questions about the lessons to ensure they learned correctly.
- **Never force children to do things they are afraid to do.**
  - ♦ However, these children are more embarrassed to perform tasks in front of their peers. Do not confuse this with fear. Encourage them to perform the tasks, but do not force them.
  - ♦ These children understand more complex words. When using these words, simply ensure that they understand what you are talking about. Ex. When showing the SCBA, explain that "SCBA" is a "self-contained breathing apparatus" which is an air bottle or air tank that holds clean air not oxygen.
- **Never allow the children to operate the hose.** Some experts believe that this confuses the children. You have just taught them to get out of a fire, but they now think that

they should spray water on fire because you have taught them how to use the hose. These children are more likely to take risks. Be extremely careful about performing or talking about dangerous tasks. They may have never thought to try a risky task, but you have just put the idea in their head. They will likely tell you about a dangerous task they have already performed or seen performed by peers. Do not encourage this behavior.

- **Props**

- Use props such as a black sheet, window, door, and tree to allow the children to practice a fire drill in the classroom and felt “flames” to practice stop, drop, and roll.
- The State Fire Marshal’s Office has a Fire Safety House, a mobile unit that simulates the kitchen and bedroom of a house. Equipped with heated doors, smoke alarms, sprinkler heads, smoking appliances, and a fire escape ladder it is used to teach audiences of all ages exit drills, smoke alarm use and maintenance, the proper way to exit a burning house, and fire extinguisher use. For more information or to schedule an event with the Fire Safety House, please contact the Fire Safety Education Division at 888-900-7414.
- The Sparky’s Hazard House is a dollhouse-like tabletop prop that can be used to teach hazards in the home. It is available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.
- 9-1-1 simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.

# 9th-12th grade

## 9-1-1

- Use 9-1-1 only for emergencies.
- In a fire emergency, always call 9-1-1 **after** you escape a burning building.

### Tips

- Always say call nine-one-one; never say nine eleven.
- Use a 9-1-1 simulator or unplugged phone to allow the audience to practice calling. 9-1-1 simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.

### Information to give the emergency operator

- Stay calm.
- Tell the 9-1-1 operator your address.
- Tell the 9-1-1 operator the address of the emergency.
- Tell the 9-1-1 operator what the emergency is.
- Answer all questions you are asked.
- Stay on the phone until the 9-1-1 operator tells you to hang up.

## Smoke alarms

- Every home must have working smoke alarms.
  - Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a home fire in half.
- Have smoke alarms in and near the bedroom where you can hear them when you sleep especially if you sleep with your bedroom door closed. For the best protection, interconnect the smoke alarms.
- For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home; when one sounds, they all sound. Wireless battery-operated interconnected smoke alarms are now available.
- An ionization smoke alarm is generally more responsive to flaming fires; a photoelectric, smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires. For the best protection or where extra time is needed to awaken or assist others both types of alarms or combination ionization and photoelectric alarms (also known as dual sensor alarms) are recommended.
- Smoke alarms should be installed away from the kitchen to prevent false alarms. Generally, they should be at least 10 feet away from a cooking appliance.
- A smoke alarm installed within 10 to 20 feet of a cooking appliance should be a photoelectric, type which reduces false alarms or have a hush feature which temporarily reduces the sensitivity of the alarm.

- Know the sound.
- When you hear the smoke alarm, get out and stay out.
- Go to your outside meeting place.
- Call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or neighbor's house.

### **Testing and maintenance**

- Test smoke alarms in accordance with manufacturer's instructions at least once a month.
- Use care to prevent falls when using step stools and ladders to test a smoke alarm.
- Dust or vacuum smoke alarms annually and/or whenever the battery is changed.

### **Tips**

- To avoid climbing, suggest using a broom handle to test the alarm.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.

### **Deaf or hard of hearing**

- Smoke alarms and alert devices, called accessories, are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Choose smoke alarms and accessories that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Research the available products, and select one that best meets your individual needs.

### **Battery replacement**

- Smoke alarms with sealed, long-life batteries are designed to remain effective for 10 years. If the alarm chirps, warning that the battery is low, replace the entire smoke alarm right away.
- Replace the battery in an unsealed, long-life battery smoke alarm when it chirps warning that the battery is low.
- For smoke alarms with any other type of battery, replace batteries at least once a year. If that alarm chirps, replace only the battery.

### **Smoke alarm replacement**

- Replace all smoke alarms (including hard-wired) when they are 10 years old or sooner if they do not respond properly when tested.
- Combination smoke-carbon monoxide alarms should be replaced according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Choose a smoke alarm with a long-life lithium battery.

# Carbon monoxide

## Dangers of carbon monoxide

- Carbon monoxide (CO), often called the “silent killer”, is a gas you cannot see, taste, or smell. It is created when fuels (such as kerosene, gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, methane, etc) do not burn properly.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning can result from faulty furnaces or other heating appliances, portable generators, water heaters, clothes dryers, or cars left running in garages.
- Exposure to undetected high levels of carbon monoxide can be fatal.

## Installation

- Choose a CO alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Install and maintain CO alarms in a central location outside each separate sleeping area on every level inside your home to provide early warning of carbon monoxide.
- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for placement.
- Combination smoke/CO alarms must be installed in accordance with the requirements for smoke alarms.
- CO alarms are not substitutes for smoke alarms and vice versa. Know the difference between the sound of smoke alarms and the sound of CO alarms.
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## Testing and Replacement

- Test CO alarms at least once a month and replace CO alarms if they fail to respond correctly when tested. Replace CO alarms according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Replace CO alarm batteries when the audible low-battery signal sounds.
- To keep CO alarms working properly, follow the manufacturer’s instructions for cleaning.
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## If your CO alarm sounds

- Immediately move to a fresh air location (outdoors or by an open window or door). Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for.
- Call 9-1-1 from a fresh air location, and remain at the fresh air location until emergency personnel arrive to assist you.

# Home fire escape

## Plan

- Make a home escape plan. Draw a map of each level of the home. Show all doors and windows. Discuss the plan with everyone in your household, including visitors.
- Children, older adults, and people with disabilities may need assistance to wake up and get out. Ensure that someone will help them. Have a plan for everyone in your home who has a disability.
- Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible. Make sure all doors and windows that lead outside open easily.
- If you have a window air conditioner, make sure there is still a second way out of the room.
- Windows with security bars, grilles, and window guards should have emergency release devices.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows how to call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or from a neighbor's phone.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows the sound and understands the warning of the smoke alarms and how to respond.
- Have an outside meeting place (something permanent, such as a tree, light pole, or mailbox) a safe distance in front of the home.
- Make sure your house number can be seen day or night from the street.
- If you have escape ladders for escaping from the second and third floors, make sure they are listed by a recognized testing laboratory. Make sure the escape ladder fits the window. Use only if all other exits are blocked. To prevent injury from a fall, use the escape ladder only in a real emergency.
- Teach children how to escape on their own in case you cannot help them

## Practice

- Practice the plan with everyone in your home twice a year and at least once at night with the lights off.
- Practice the plan with overnight guests.
- Push the smoke alarm button to start the drill.
- Practice what to do in case there is smoke.
- Get low and go.
- Get out fast.
- Practice using different ways out.
- Close doors behind you as you leave.
- Go to your outside meeting place.
- Practice opening your home escape ladder and dropping it out the window but not using it.
- After you practice, evaluate your home fire drill and discuss what worked and what could be improved. Improve it and practice again.

## **If there is a fire**

- When the smoke alarm sounds, get out fast and stay out. You may have only seconds to escape safely.
- If there is smoke blocking your door or first way out, use your second way out.
- Smoke is toxic. If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your way out.
- Before opening a door, feel the door and doorknob. If either is hot, leave the door closed and use your second way out.
- If you open a door, open it slowly. Be ready to shut it quickly if heavy smoke or fire is present.
- Close doors behind you as you leave.
- Get out and stay out. Never go back inside for any reason.
- If you can't get to someone needing assistance, leave the home and call 9-1-1. Tell the emergency dispatcher where the person is located.
- If pets are trapped inside your home, tell firefighters right away.
- Go to your outside meeting place.
- Call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or neighbor's house.
- If you can't get out:
  - ♦ close the door
  - ♦ cover vents and cracks around doors with cloth or tape to keep smoke out
  - ♦ call 9-1-1
  - ♦ stay where you are and signal for help at the window with a light-colored cloth or flashlight

## **If you are on fire**

- If your clothes catch fire, stop immediately.
- Drop to the ground.
- Cover your face with your hands.
- Roll over and over or back and forth to put out the fire.
- If you cannot stop, drop, and roll keep a blanket or towel nearby to help you or others smother flames. Cover the person with a blanket to smother the fire. If you use a wheelchair, scooter, or other device and are able to get to the floor, lock the device first to stay in place before getting on the floor to roll until the flames are out.
- Cool a burn right away by putting it in cool water for three to five minutes.
  - ♦ Cover the burn with a clean, dry cloth.
  - ♦ Do not apply creams, ointments, sprays, or other home remedies.
  - ♦ Get medical help right away by calling 9-1-1.

## **Burns**

### **Prevent scalds and burns in the kitchen**

- Teach children that hot thing burn.

- Place hot objects so they cannot be pulled down or knocked over.
- Turn pot handles away from the stove's edge.
- Keep appliance cords coiled and away from counter edges.
- Keep hot foods and liquids away from table and counter edges.
- Use dry oven mitts or potholders. Hot cookware or tableware can heat moisture in a hot pad causing a scald burn.
- If you have small children in the home, cook on the back burners.
- When children are old enough, teach them to cook safely.

### **Hot tap water and scald burns**

- If children are in the home, don't leave the bathroom while the tub is filling.
- Before placing a child in the bath or getting into the tub yourself, test the water.
- Fill the tub or sink by running cool water first and then adding hot water. Turn hot water off first. Mix the water thoroughly and check the temperature by moving your hand, wrist, and forearm through the water. The water should feel warm to the touch.
- When bathing a young child, seat the child facing away from the faucets so the child cannot reach the faucet. Turn the faucet to the "COLD" position.
- Never leave a child unattended in a tub of water.

### **Treatment of burns**

- Cool a burn right away by putting it in cool water for three to five minutes.
- Cover with a clean, dry cloth. Do not apply creams, ointments, sprays, or other home remedies.
- Remove all clothing, diapers, jewelry, and metal from the burned area. These can hide underlying burns and retain heat, thereby increasing skin damage.
- Call 9-1-1 or see your doctor if the burn is:
  - ♦ on the face, hands, feet, major joints, or genital area and /or bigger than the injured person's palm
  - ♦ white, tight, dry (leathery), or painless
  - ♦ caused by chemicals or electricity
  - ♦ causing difficulty breathing
- See a doctor as soon as possible if the burn:
  - ♦ does not heal in 2 to 3 days
  - ♦ becomes foul smelling
  - ♦ develops thick drainage, redness, or swelling
  - ♦ causes fever

### **Matches and lighters**

- Keep matches and lighters up high, in a locked cabinet, out of the reach of children.
- Purchase and use only child-resistant lighters.
- Teach young children to tell a grown-up if they find matches or lighters and never to touch them.

- Lighters that look like toys can confuse children. Do not buy or use them.
  - Beginning July 1, 2010, sale of toy-like lighters is banned in Mississippi.

## Smoking

**NOTE:** Discourage smoking, drinking, and drug use. However, the reality is that students of this age may have already started smoking. They may also be experimenting with or using drugs and/or alcohol.

- Smoking is the leading cause of most home fire deaths.
- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- If you smoke, use only fire-safe cigarettes.
- Be alert when you smoke. You are not alert if you are sleepy or drowsy from medicine, drugs, or alcohol.
- Use deep, sturdy ashtrays. If ashtrays are not available, use a metal can or pail.
- Never empty smoking materials directly into a trash can. Place them away from anything that can burn. Make sure butts are out by dousing them in water or sand before you throw them out.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Never smoke where medical oxygen is used. Medical oxygen can cause materials to ignite more easily and make fire burn at a faster rate than normal. It can make an existing fire burn faster and hotter.
- Before going to bed, check under furniture cushions and in other places people smoke for cigarette butts that may have fallen out of sight.
- Do not extinguish or throw cigarettes in vegetation, potted plants, landscaping, peat moss, dried grasses, mulch, leaves, and other similar items; they can easily catch fire.
- Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, and other smoking materials up high out of the reach of children in a locked cabinet.

## Candles

- Burning candles are dangerous. Consider using battery-operated flameless candles.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Extinguish candles when you leave a room.
- Be careful not to splatter wax when extinguishing a candle. Using a candle snuffer is safer than blowing the candle out.
- When using candles, place them in sturdy, safe candleholders that will not burn.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.
- Never use a candle when medical oxygen is being used.
- Protect candle flames with glass chimneys or containers.
- Never use candles in bedrooms and sleeping areas.
- Always use a flashlight, not a candle, for emergency lighting.
- Use only battery-powered lights in tents, trailers, motor homes, and boats.

## **Cooking**

**NOTE:** These children may be babysitting or have their own children and be responsible for cooking. These students may also be preparing to leave home for a college or off-campus housing where they will be responsible for cooking for themselves. Discourage drinking and drug use. However, the reality is these students may have already started experimenting with or using drugs and/or alcohol.

### **Stay alert**

- You must be alert. You are not alert if you are sleepy, have taken medicine or drugs that make you drowsy, or have consumed alcohol.

### **Watch what you heat**

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.

### **Keep things that can catch fire away from heat sources**

- Keep things that can catch on fire (oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels, or curtains) away from your stovetop.
- Do not store things that can catch on fire in an oven or toaster oven.
- Keep the stovetop, burners, and oven clean.
- Wear short, close-fitting, or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire if it comes in contact with a gas flame or an electric burner.

### **Keep kids and pets away from the cooking area**

- Have a “kid-free zone” of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.
- Never hold a child while you are cooking, drinking a hot liquid, or carrying hot foods or liquids.
- Keep pets off cooking surfaces and nearby countertops to prevent them from knocking things onto the burner.

### **What to do if you have a cooking fire**

- When in doubt, just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire. After you leave, call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or a neighbor’s telephone.

- If you are trained and decide to fight the fire, be sure others are already getting out and you have a clear path to the exit.
- Always keep a lid that fits the pan or cookie sheet and an oven mitt nearby when you cook.
- If a small fire starts in a pan, smother the fire by carefully sliding the lid or cookie sheet over the pan while wearing your oven mitt. Turn off the burner. Do not move the pan. To keep the fire from restarting, keep the lid on until the pan is completely cool.
- Never pour water on a grease fire.
- Never discharge a fire extinguisher directly into a pan fire because it can spread the fire.
- In case of an oven or microwave fire, turn off the oven or microwave and keep the door closed until it is cool. Unplug an electric oven or microwave if you can safely reach the wall outlet. After the fire, have the equipment checked and/or serviced before you use it again.

### **Microwave ovens**

- Always supervise children when they are using the microwave oven.
- Use only microwave-safe cookware (containers or dishes). Never use aluminum foil or metal objects in a microwave oven.
- Open food cooked in the microwave slowly, away from the face. Hot steam escaping from a container of food cooked in the microwave or the food itself can cause burns.
- Never heat a baby bottle in a microwave because it heats liquids unevenly. Heat baby bottles in warm water from the faucet.
- If your microwave is mounted over your stove, use extra caution.

## **Heating**

### **General heating**

- Have a three-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Supervise children whenever a wood stove or other space heater is being used.
- Use a sturdy metal screen to prevent contact burns, which are more common than flame burns.
- All heaters need space. Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Never use your oven or stove for heating. Ovens and stoves are not designed to heat your home.

### **Portable electric space heaters**

- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn in every direction.
- Turn heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.

- Place portable space heaters on a solid, flat surface and keep them and their electrical cord away from things that can burn, high traffic areas, and doorways.
- Plug space heaters directly into wall outlets and never into an extension cord or power strip.
- Do not plug anything else into the same wall outlet as the one you are using for your space heater. Doing so could result in overheating.
- Check often for a secure plug/outlet fit. If the plug does not fit snugly into the wall outlet or if the plug becomes very hot, the wall outlet may need to be replaced. Do not use the heater in this wall outlet.
- Inspect for cracked, frayed, or damaged cords; broken plugs; or loose connections. Do not use the heater if you find damage.

### **Fuel burning space heaters**

- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn in every direction.
- Always use the proper fuel as specified by the manufacturer. You should never use gasoline in a fuel burning heater.
- When refueling, allow the appliance to cool first and then refuel outside or in a well-ventilated area.
- When using the heater, open a window to ensure adequate ventilation.
- In portable kerosene or other liquid-fueled space heaters, always use the proper grade of the proper fuel for the heater. It is best to leave refueling to an adult.
- If the pilot light of your gas heater goes out, allow 5 minutes or more for the gas to go away before trying again, do not allow gas to accumulate, and light the match before you turn on the gas to the pilot to avoid risk of flashback.
- If you smell gas in your gas heater, do not attempt to light the appliance. Leave the building immediately and call 9-1-1 or the gas company from outside.

### **Wood burning stoves**

- In wood stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood pellets.
- Start the fire with newspaper, kindling, or fire starters. Never use flammable liquids, such as lighter fluid, kerosene, gasoline, or diesel to start a fire.
- Keep the doors of your wood stove closed unless loading or stoking the fire.
- Allow ashes to cool completely before disposing. Place ashes in a tightly covered metal container and keep the ash container at least 10 feet away from the home and any other nearby buildings. Never empty the ash directly into a trash can. Douse and saturate the ashes with water.

### **Fireplaces**

- Always use a metal or heat-tempered glass screen on a fireplace and keep it in place.

- Burn only dry, seasoned wood. Not only is it cleaner for the environment, it also creates less buildup in the chimney.
- Use artificial logs according to manufacturer’s recommendations. Never burn more than one log at a time.
- Use only newspaper, kindling wood, or fire starters to start a fire. Never use flammable liquids, such as lighter fluid, kerosene, gasoline, or diesel to start a fire. They produce invisible vapors that can easily catch fire.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the fireplace. Glass doors and screens can remain dangerously hot for several hours after the fire goes out.
- Use chimineas, outdoor fireplaces, and fire pits only outdoors and at least 10 feet away from the home or anything that can burn.

### **Central heating**

- Keep things that can burn at least 3 feet away from the furnace. Keep the furnace area clean and uncluttered.
- If you smell gas, do not light the appliance. Leave the building immediately and call 9-1-1 or the gas company from outside.
- 

### **Fire pots, personal fireplaces, and patio torches**

- Due to the extreme danger of fire pots, personal fireplaces, and patio torches, do not use these devices. Leave their use to adults.

### **Medical oxygen**

- When medical oxygen or an oxygen tank is in use, the amount of oxygen in the air, furniture, clothing, hair, and bedding goes up, making it easier for a fire to start and spread. This means that there is a higher risk of both fires and burns.
- A patient on oxygen should not smoke
- Never smoke in a home where medical oxygen is used. Medical oxygen can cause material to ignite more easily and make fires burn at a faster rate than normal. It can make an existing fire burn faster and hotter.
- Post “No Smoking” and “No Open Flames” signs in and outside of the home to remind residents and guests not to smoke.
- Keep oxygen cylinders at least five feet from a heat source, open flames, or electrical devices.
- Never use a candle, match, lighter, or other open flame; a fireplace, stove, or other device fueled by gas, kerosene, wood, or coal; a sparking toy; or smoke in a home where medical oxygen is used.
- Keep oil and grease away from where oxygen is in use. Body oil, hand lotion, and items containing oil and grease can easily ignite.
- Never use aerosol sprays containing combustible materials near oxygen.

## Electrical

- Electrical work should be done only by a qualified electrician. Some communities require that a person doing electrical work have a license. Find out about the laws in your area.

### Inside the home

- Keep lamps, light fixtures, and light bulbs away from anything that can burn. This includes furniture, bedding, curtains, clothing, and flammable or combustible gases and liquids.
- Use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or fixture.
- Major appliances (refrigerators, stoves, washers, dryers, etc.) should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Never use an extension cord; it can be easily overloaded.
- Small appliances should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Unplug small appliances when not in use.
- Window air conditioners should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Many manufacturers of room air conditioners prohibit the use of extension cords. If manufacturer's instructions allow extension cords, follow the instructions for the proper type.
- If you have young children, install tamper-resistant electrical outlets. Where replacement is not possible, install new protective outlet covers which do not allow a child to insert an object into the outlet.
- Call a qualified electrician if you have:
  - ♦ recurring problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers
  - ♦ a tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance
  - ♦ discolored or warm wall outlets or switches
  - ♦ a burning smell or rubbery odor coming from an appliance
  - ♦ flickering lights
  - ♦ sparks from a wall outlet
  - ♦ cracked or broken wall outlets

### Outside the home

- Keep ladders at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.
- Never touch a power line. Assume that all power lines are live. Stay at a safe distance – you could be electrocuted.
- Never touch a person who is in contact with a downed wire.
- Report downed power lines to authorities.
- Some power lines are underground. Call your local authority to have lines identified and marked before digging. You can also call the national 8-1-1 “Call before you dig” number.

## Outdoor burning

**NOTE:** These children should not be burning outdoors alone. However, many of them may be assisting parents with outdoor burning. Consult the teacher for advice.

- Check with your local fire department or county fire coordinator for advice on open air, recreational, or outdoor cooking fires. Check with your local fire department, county fire coordinator, municipality, or County Board of Supervisors for any restrictions or burn bans before starting open air, recreational, or outdoor cooking fire. This includes campfires, brush fires, fire pits, chimeneas, and outdoor fireplaces. Obtain proper permits, if required. Outdoor burning may not be permitted in some municipalities and during some seasons of the year.
- Closely supervise all outdoor fires. Make sure the fire is out before leaving.
- Supervise children around any outdoor fire.
- Use chimeneas, outdoor fireplaces, and fire pits outdoors only and at least 25 feet away from the home or anything that can burn.
- Permitted open fires need to be at least 50 feet from anything that can burn.
- Do not burn on windy, dry days. When conditions are windy or dry, it is too easy for open burning to spread out of control.
- Where outdoor burning is allowed, never use gasoline or other flammable or combustible liquids.
- Have a hose, bucket of water, or shovel and dirt or sand nearby when burning to extinguish the fire.

## Lightning

### Indoor safety

- Stay off corded phones, computers, and other electronic equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity or plumbing.
- Avoid washing your hands, showering, bathing, doing laundry, or washing dishes.
- Stay away from windows and doors.
- If the lights go out, use only battery-powered lights in homes, tents, trailers, motor homes, and boats.

### Outdoor safety

- Seek shelter immediately in a building or a hard-topped vehicle.
- If you are in or on open water, go to land and seek shelter immediately.
- If you can't get to shelter and you feel your hair stand on end, indicating that lightning is about to strike, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground. **This is a last resort when a building or hard-topped vehicle is not available.**

- If a person is struck by lightning, call 9-1-1 and get medical care immediately. Lightning strike victims carry no electrical charge; attend to them immediately. Administer CPR if needed.

## Clothes dryers

**NOTE:** These children may be responsible for assisting with household chores. These students may also be preparing to leave home for a college or off-campus housing where they will be responsible for themselves.

- Do not use the dryer without a lint filter.
- Make sure the air exhaust vent is not restricted and the outdoor vent flap will open when the dryer is operating.
- Clean the dryer's lint filter before and after each load of laundry.
- Follow the manufacturer's operating instructions. Do not overload the dryer.
- Turn off the dryer when you leave home or go to bed.

## Fire extinguishers

**NOTE:** Teaching any non-professional to use fire extinguishers is not recommended. If you do, use extreme caution. However, these students may be required to have fire extinguisher training for some high school classes. **Do not recommend fire extinguisher use unless you provide training.**

- Firefighting should be left to the fire department.
- Only use a fire extinguisher if you have been trained. Learn and practice how to use fire extinguishers **before** a fire occurs.
- Fire extinguishers have limits. Never try to extinguish a fire that is larger than a small trash can.
- Before trying to fight a fire, make sure everyone is leaving the house, someone is calling 9-1-1, you can get out, and you are using the proper fire extinguisher.
- If the fire does not go out after using one extinguisher, GET OUT!
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height. A person should not have to travel far (more than 40 feet) to reach one and should never have to travel up or down stairs to reach it.
- Fire extinguishers for the home should have a rating of at least 2-A:10-B:C.
- Inspect fire extinguishers monthly and have them serviced annually.

### Tips & Techniques

- **Attitudes**
  - ♦ Invite students' opinions, but do not engage in arguments. Ignore unpleasant body language indicating boredom or displeasure as long as it does not disrupt other students' learning.
  - ♦ Be cautious with humor. Children know when it is forced or unnatural.
  - ♦ Be a positive role model, but don't feel that you have to be the children's friend.

- **Never force children to do things they are afraid to do.** However, these children are more likely to be embarrassed to perform tasks in front of their peers. Do not confuse this with fear. Encourage them to perform the tasks, but do not force them.
- **These children feel that they are adults.** Treat them as young adults; however, remember they are not adults and are still unable to react as adults. These students may be largely responsible for the home and younger siblings, at least part of the time. Some of these students may even be parents themselves. Some information may be a little advanced for some students. Seek advice from the teacher to determine what is appropriate. For more advanced students, consider using the College lesson.
- **Never allow the children to operate the hose.** Some experts believe that this confuses the children. You have just taught them to get out of a fire, but they now think that they should spray water on fire because you have taught them how to use the hose. These children are more likely to take risks. Be extremely careful about performing or talking about dangerous tasks. They may have never thought to try a risky task, but you have just put the idea in their head. They will likely tell you about a dangerous task they have already performed or seen performed by friends. Do not encourage this behavior.
- **Props**
  - ♦ Use props such as a black sheet, window, door, and tree to allow the children to practice a fire drill in the classroom and felt “flames” to practice stop, drop, and roll.
  - ♦ The State Fire Marshal’s Office has a Fire Safety House, a mobile unit that simulates the kitchen and bedroom of a house. Equipped with heated doors, smoke alarms, sprinkler heads, smoking appliances, and a fire escape ladder it is used to teach audiences of all ages exit drills, smoke alarm use and maintenance, the proper way to exit a burning house, and fire extinguisher use. For more information or to schedule an event with the Fire Safety House, please contact the Fire Safety Education Division at 888-900-7414.
  - ♦ The Sparky’s Hazard House is a dollhouse-like tabletop prop that can be used to teach hazards in the home. It is available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.
  - ♦ 9-1-1 simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.

# College

## 9-1-1

- Use 9-1-1 only for emergencies.
- Use a 9-1-1 simulator or unplugged phone to allow the audience to practice calling. Simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.
- In a fire emergency, always call 9-1-1 **after** you escape a burning building.

### Information to give the emergency operator

- Stay calm.
- Tell the 9-1-1 operator your address.
- Tell the 9-1-1 operator the address of the emergency.
- Tell the 9-1-1 operator what the emergency is.
- Answer all questions you are asked.
- Stay on the phone until the 9-1-1 operator tells you to hang up.

## Smoke alarms

### Installation

- Every home must have working smoke alarms.
  - Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a home fire in half.
- Smoke alarms should be installed in every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of the home, including the basement. Larger homes may require additional smoke alarms to provide a minimum level of protection.
- For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home; when one sounds, they all sound. Wireless battery-operated interconnected smoke alarms are now available.
- An ionization smoke alarm is generally more responsive to flaming fires; a photoelectric smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires. For the best protection or where extra time is needed to awaken or assist others both types of alarms or combination ionization and photoelectric alarms (also known as dual sensor alarms) are recommended.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows the sound of the smoke alarm and how to respond.
- Choose a smoke alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Smoke alarms should be installed away from the kitchen to prevent false alarms. Generally, they should be at least 10 feet away from a cooking appliance.

- A smoke alarm installed within 10 to 20 feet of a cooking appliance should be a photoelectric type to reduce false alarms or have a hush feature which temporarily reduces the sensitivity of the alarm.

## **Testing and maintenance**

- Test smoke alarms in accordance with manufacturer's instructions at least once a month.
- Use care to prevent falls when using step stools and ladders to test a smoke alarm.
  - ♦ To avoid climbing, suggest using a broom handle to test the alarm.
  - ♦ Some smoke alarms are designed to be tested with a television remote to reduce the risk of falls.
- Dust or vacuum smoke alarms annually and/or whenever the battery is changed.
  - ♦ Follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.

## **Deaf or hard of hearing**

- Smoke alarms and alert devices, called accessories, are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Choose smoke alarms and accessories that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Research the available products, and select one that best meets your individual needs.
- Strobe lights installed throughout the home of people who are deaf are activated by smoke alarms and alert them to fire conditions. When people who are deaf are asleep, a high intensity strobe light along with a pillow or bed shaker is required to wake them up and alert them to fire conditions so they can escape. Newer technology equipment is activated by the sound of a standard smoke alarm.
- Accessories that produce a loud, mixed low-pitched sound are usually installed next to the bed of people who are hard of hearing. This equipment is activated by the sound of the smoke alarm. People who are hard of hearing may find that a pillow or bed shaker is also effective to wake them up.
- Recent research has shown that a loud, mixed low-pitched sound is more effective for waking people of all ages than the loud, high-pitched sound of a traditional smoke alarm. As people age, their ability to hear high-pitched sounds decreases.

## **Sleeping with bedroom door open or closed**

- Make sure everyone can hear the sound of the smoke alarms and understand the warning of the smoke alarms.
- If you sleep with bedroom doors closed, have interconnected smoke alarms.

## **Smoke alarm replacement**

- Replace all smoke alarms (including hard-wired) when they are 10 years old.
- Immediately replace any smoke alarm that does not respond properly when tested.
- Combination smoke-carbon monoxide alarms should be replaced according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

## **Battery replacement**

- Smoke alarms with sealed, long-life batteries are designed to remain effective for 10 years. If the alarm chirps, warning that the battery is low, replace the entire smoke alarm right away.
- Replace the battery in an unsealed, long-life battery smoke alarm when it chirps warning that the battery is low.
- For smoke alarms with any other type of battery, replace batteries at least once a year. If that alarm chirps, replace only the battery.

## **Rental units**

- All rental units need working smoke alarms.
- Check with your local fire or building department for state and local ordinances on smoke alarm installation and maintenance in rental units.
- If you rent and do not have working smoke alarms, contact your landlord or property manager immediately about having them installed.
- If after you have contacted your landlord or property manager smoke alarms remain uninstalled, consider installing them yourself or having someone install them for you. Some fire departments will install smoke alarms for you.
- If the smoke alarms are not working the battery or the smoke alarm itself may need to be replaced. This may be the responsibility of you or the landlord depending on your rental agreement.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month.
- Make sure everyone in the home understands the warning of the smoke alarm and how to respond.
- Dust or vacuum smoke alarms annually and/or whenever the battery is changed. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.

## **Disposal of smoke alarms**

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offers information on the safe disposal of smoke alarms at [www.epa.gov/radiation/sources/smoke\\_dispose.htm](http://www.epa.gov/radiation/sources/smoke_dispose.htm).

## **Home fire sprinklers**

- Sprinklers protect lives and property by keeping fires small. Because the sprinkler system reacts so quickly, it can dramatically reduce the heat, flames, and smoke produced in a fire, allowing people time to escape safely.
- Sprinklers activate independently. Only the sprinkler closest to the fire will activate, spraying water directly on the fire, not the rest of the house.
- A sprinkler will control or put out a fire with a fraction of the water that would be used by fire department hoses.
- Accidental sprinkler discharges are extremely rare.
- Home fire sprinklers can be installed in new or existing homes. If you are building or remodeling your home, install a home fire sprinkler system.

- It is especially important to install a home fire sprinkler system in homes with persons who may not be able to get out without help, such as people with disabilities, young children, or older adults.

## **Installation**

- Have a qualified contractor install your home fire sprinkler system according to local codes, standards, and fire safety regulations.
- Home fire sprinklers work along with smoke alarms to save lives. NPFA data shows that home fire sprinklers cut the risk of dying in a home fire by 80%.

## **Maintenance**

- The home fire sprinkler installer must provide instructions on inspecting, testing, and maintaining the system. It is a simple process that can be performed by the home occupant. A simple visual inspection should be done monthly to ensure the water valve on the sprinkler is open.
- Periodic visual inspection of all sprinklers should be done monthly to make sure nothing is blocking them and nothing is hung on or attached to them.
- Do a water flow test on the sprinkler system every six months or have a fire sprinkler contractor do the test to ensure all water flow devices are working.
- Keep sprinklers clear and free of objects that can interfere with their proper use.
- Inspect tanks, if present, monthly to make sure they are full.
- Where a pump is used, start it every month to make sure that it works and that it does not trip any circuit breakers.
- Whenever painting, make sure sprinklers are not painted by covering them with a bag, which should be removed immediately after the work is done.

## **Carbon monoxide**

### **Dangers of carbon monoxide**

- Carbon monoxide (CO), often called the “silent killer”, is a gas you cannot see, taste, or smell. It is created when fuels (such as kerosene, gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, methane, etc) do not burn properly. Exposure to undetected high levels of carbon monoxide can be fatal.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning can result from faulty furnaces or other heating appliances, portable generators, water heaters, clothes dryers, or cars left running in garages.
- Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning may include headache, nausea, and drowsiness.
- Exposure to undetected high levels of carbon monoxide can be fatal, causing death within minutes.

## **Installation**

- Choose a CO alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each separate sleeping area, on every level of the home, and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes, or standards. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Combination smoke/CO alarms must be installed in accordance with the requirements for smoke alarms.
- CO alarms are not substitutes for smoke alarms and vice versa. Know the difference between the sound of smoke alarms and the sound of CO alarms.

## **Testing and replacement**

- Test CO alarms at least once a month and replace CO alarms if they fail to respond correctly when tested. Replace the CO alarm according to the manufacturer's instructions or when the end-of-life signal sounds.
- Know the difference between the sound of the CO alarm and the smoke alarm, and their low-battery signals. If the audible low-battery signal sounds, replace the batteries or replace the device. If it still sounds, get to a fresh air location. Call 9-1-1 from a neighbor's house or cell phone.
- To keep CO alarms working well, follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.

## **Carbon monoxide precautions**

### **Inside the home**

- Have fuel-burning heating equipment (fireplaces, furnaces, water heaters, wood and coal stoves, space or portable heaters) and chimneys inspected by a professional every year.
- Open the damper for proper ventilation before using the fireplace.
- Never use your oven or stovetop to heat your home. The CO might kill people and pets.
- When purchasing new heating and cooking equipment, select products tested and labeled by a recognized testing laboratory.
- Make sure all fuel-burning vented equipment is vented to the outside to avoid CO poisoning. Keep the venting for exhaust clear and unblocked.

### **Outside the home**

- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Never run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not blocked with snow, ice, or other materials. The CO might kill people and pets.

- Make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow and other debris.
- Only use barbecue grills, which can produce carbon monoxide, outside away from all doors, windows, vents, and other building openings. Never use them in the home, garage, or near building openings.
- Use only battery-powered lights in homes, tents, trailers, motor homes, and motor boats during power outages.

### **Portable generators**

- Use portable generators outdoors in well-ventilated areas away from all doors, windows, vents, and other building openings to prevent exhaust fumes from entering the home.
- When using portable generators, install CO alarms in the home according to the manufacturer's installation instructions.

### **If your CO alarm sounds**

- Immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for.
- Call 9-1-1 from a fresh air location (outdoors or by an open window). Remain at a fresh air location until emergency personnel arrives to assist you.

## **Home fire escape**

### **Plan**

- Make a home escape plan. Draw a map of each level of the home. Show all doors and windows. Discuss the plan with everyone in your household, including visitors.
- Children, older adults, and people with disabilities may need assistance to wake up and get out. Ensure that someone will help them. Have a plan for everyone in your home who has a disability.
- Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible. Make sure all doors and windows that lead outside open easily.
- If you have a window air conditioner, make sure there is still a second way out of the room.
- Windows with security bars, grilles, and window guards should have emergency release devices.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows how to call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or from a neighbor's phone.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows the sound and understands the warning of the smoke alarms and how to respond.
- Have an outside meeting place (something permanent, like a tree, light pole, or mailbox) a safe distance in front of the home.
- Make sure your house number can be seen day or night from the street.

- If you have escape ladders for escaping from the second and third floors, make sure they are listed by a recognized testing laboratory. Make sure the escape ladder fits the window. Use only if all other exits are blocked. To prevent injury from a fall, use the ladder only in a real emergency.
- Teach your children how to escape on their own in case you cannot help them.

## **Practice**

- Practice the plan with everyone in your home twice a year and at least once at night with the lights off.
- Practice the plan with overnight guests.
- Push the smoke alarm button to start the drill.
- Practice what to do in case there is smoke.
- Get low and go.
- Get out fast.
- Practice using different ways out.
- Close doors behind you as you leave.
- Go to your outside meeting place.
- Practice opening your home escape ladder and placing it out the window but not using it.
- After you practice, evaluate your home fire drill and discuss what worked and what could be improved. Improve it and practice again.

## **If there is a fire**

- When the smoke alarm sounds, get out fast. You may have only seconds to escape safely.
- If there is smoke blocking your door or first way out, use your second way out.
- Smoke is toxic. If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your way out.
- Before opening a door, feel the door and doorknob. If either is hot, leave the door closed and use your second way out.
- If you open a door, open it slowly. Be ready to shut it quickly if heavy smoke or fire is present.
- Close doors behind you as you leave.
- Get out and stay out. Never go back inside for any reason.
- If you can't get to someone needing assistance, leave the home and call 9-1-1. Tell the emergency operator where the person is located.
- If pets are trapped inside your home, tell firefighters right away.
- If you can't get out, close the door, and cover vents and cracks around doors with cloth or tape to keep smoke out. Call 9-1-1. Stay where you are and signal for help at the window with a light-colored cloth or flashlight.
- Go to your outside meeting place.
- Call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or neighbor's house.

## **Hotels/Motels**

- Choose a hotel that is protected by both smoke alarms and fire sprinklers.
- When you check in, ask the desk clerk what the fire alarm sounds like. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, ask for a room equipped with a smoke alarm and accessories that will awaken you, or a portable smoke alarm made specifically for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to place in your room. You may want to consider taking one with you.
- Read the escape plan posted in your room.
- Count the number of doors between your room and the nearest two fire exits. Open the exit doors to be sure they are unlocked.
- Keep your room key by your bed and take it with you if there is a fire. If you cannot escape, you may have to return to your room.
- If you hear an alarm, leave immediately, closing all doors behind you.
- Use the stairs – never use elevators during a fire.
- If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your exit.
- If all escape routes are blocked, return to your room. Shut off fans and air conditioners. Stuff wet towels or bedding in the crack around the doors and vents. Call 9-1-1 to let them know your location. Wait at a window and signal for help with a flashlight or light-colored cloth.
- Take a flashlight; keep it near your bed.

## **If you are on fire**

- If your clothes catch fire, stop immediately.
- Drop to the ground.
- Cover your face with your hands.
- Roll over and over or back and forth to put out the fire.
- If you cannot stop, drop, and roll, keep a blanket or towel nearby to help you or others smother flames. Cover the person with a blanket to smother the fire. If you use a wheelchair, scooter, or other device and are able to get to the floor, lock the device first to stay in place before getting on the floor to roll until the flames are out.
- Cool a burn right away by putting it in cool water for three to five minutes.
  - ♦ Cover the burn with a clean, dry cloth.
  - ♦ Do not apply creams, ointments, sprays, or other home remedies.
  - ♦ Get medical help right away by calling 9-1-1.

## **Burns**

### **Prevent scalds and burns in the kitchen**

- Have a three foot kid and pet free zone around the stove.
- Teach children that hot things burn.
- Place hot objects so they cannot be pulled down or knocked over.
- Turn pot handles away from the stove's edge.

- Keep appliance cords coiled and away from counter edges.
- Keep hot foods and liquids away from table and counter edges.
- Use dry oven mitts or potholders. Hot cookware or tableware can heat moisture in a hot pad resulting in a scald burn.
- If you have young children in the home, cook on the stove's back burners.
- When children are old enough, teach them to cook safely.

### **Hot tap water and scald burns**

- Set your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- When bathing or taking a shower, the temperature of the water should not exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Consider installing “anti-scald” devices on tub faucets and shower heads to prevent scalds.
- If you do not install “anti-scald” devices on tub faucets and shower heads, adjust the thermostat setting on your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. The lower temperature lowers the risk of scalds and burns.
- If you lower the temperature setting on your water heater, you will need to test the temperature at the faucet. Allow water to run three to five minutes. Test the water with a meat, candy, or cooking thermometer. If the water is hotter than 120 degrees Fahrenheit, adjust the temperature of the water heater and wait a full day to allow the temperature in the tank to adjust. Retest and adjust as needed.
- If children are in the home, don't leave the bathroom while the tub is filling.
- Before placing a child in the bath or getting into the tub yourself, test the water.
- Fill the tub or sink by running cool water first and then adding hot water. Turn hot water off first. Mix the water thoroughly and check the temperature by moving your hand, wrist, and forearm through the water. The water should feel warm to the touch.
- When bathing a young child, seat the child facing away from the faucets so the child cannot reach the faucet. Turn the faucet to the “COLD” position.
- Never leave a child unattended in a tub of water.

### **Treatment of burns**

- Cool a burn right away by putting it in cool water for three to five minutes.
- Cover with a clean, dry cloth. Do not apply creams, ointments, sprays, or other home remedies.
- Remove all clothing, diapers, jewelry, and metal from the burned area. These can hide underlying burns and retain heat, thereby increasing skin damage.
- Call 9-1-1 or see your doctor if the burn is:
  - on the face, hands, feet, major joints, or genital area and /or bigger than the injured person's palm
  - white, tight, dry (leathery), or painless
  - caused by chemicals or electricity
  - causing difficulty breathing
- See a doctor as soon as possible if the burn:

- ♦ does not heal in 2 to 3 days
- ♦ becomes foul smelling
- ♦ develops thick drainage, redness, or swelling
- ♦ causes fever

## Matches and lighters

- Keep matches and lighters up high, out of the reach of children, in a locked cabinet.
- Purchase and use only child-resistant lighters.
- Teach young children to tell a grown-up if they find matches or lighters, and never to touch them.
- Lighters that look like toys can confuse children. Do not buy or use them.
  - ♦ Beginning July 1, 2010, sale of toy-like lighters is banned in Mississippi.

## Smoking

- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- If you smoke, use only fire-safe cigarettes.
- To prevent a deadly cigarette fire, you must be alert. You are not alert if you are sleepy, have taken medicine or drugs that makes you drowsy, or consumed alcohol.
- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- Wherever you smoke, use deep, sturdy ashtrays. If ashtrays are not available, use a metal can or pail. Never empty smoking materials directly into a trash can. Place away from anything that can burn.
- Before you throw out butts and ashes, make sure they are out by dousing in water or sand.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Never smoke where medical oxygen is used. Medical oxygen can cause materials to ignite more easily and make fire burn at a faster rate than normal. It can make an existing fire burn faster and hotter.
- Before going to bed, check under furniture cushions and in other places people smoke for cigarette butts that may have fallen out of sight.
- Do not extinguish or throw cigarettes in vegetation, potted plants, landscaping, peat moss, dried grasses, mulch, leaves, and other similar items; they can easily catch fire.
- Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, and other smoking materials up high out of the reach of children, in a locked cabinet.

## Candles

- Consider using battery-operated flameless candles.
- When using candles, place them in sturdy, safe candleholders that will not burn.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.
- Never use a candle when medical oxygen is being used.
- Protect candle flames with glass chimneys or containers.
- Avoid using candles in bedrooms and sleeping areas.

- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Extinguish candles when you leave a room.
- Be careful not to splatter wax when extinguishing a candle. Using a candle snuffer is safer than blowing the candle out.
- Always use a flashlight, not a candle, for emergency lighting.
- Use only battery-powered lights in tents, trailers, motor homes, and boats.

## **Cooking**

### **Choose safe cooking equipment.**

- Always use cooking equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions and code requirements when installing, cleaning, and operating cooking equipment.
- Plug microwave ovens or other cooking appliances directly into a wall outlet. Never use an extension cord for a cooking appliance as it can overload the circuit and cause a fire.
- Check electrical cords for cracks, breaks, damage, or overheating. Have a professional repair the appliance or cord as needed or replace the appliance.

### **Stay alert**

- To prevent cooking fires, you must be alert. You are not alert if you are sleepy, have taken medicine or drugs that make you drowsy, or have consumed alcohol.

### **Watch what you heat**

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.

### **Keep things that can catch fire away from heat sources**

- Keep things that can catch on fire (oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels, or curtains) away from your stovetop.
- Don't store things that can catch on fire in an oven or toaster oven.
- Keep the stovetop, burners, and oven clean.
- Wear short, close-fitting, or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire if it comes in contact with a gas flame or an electric burner.

## **Keep kids and pets away from the cooking area**

- Have a “kid-free zone” of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.
- Never hold a child while you are cooking, drinking a hot liquid, or carrying hot foods or liquids.
- Keep pets off cooking surfaces and nearby countertops to prevent them from knocking things onto the burner.

## **What to do if you have a cooking fire**

- When in doubt, just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire. After you leave, call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or a neighbor’s telephone.
- If you are trained and decide to fight the fire, be sure others are already getting out and you have a clear path to the exit.
- Always keep a lid that fits the pan or cookie sheet and an oven mitt nearby when you cook.
- If a small fire starts in a pan, smother the fire by carefully sliding the lid or cookie sheet over the pan while wearing your oven mitt. Turn off the burner. Do not move the pan. To keep the fire from restarting, keep the lid on until the pan is completely cool.
- Never pour water on a grease fire.
- Never discharge a fire extinguisher directly into a pan fire because it can spread the fire.
- In case of an oven or microwave fire, turn off the oven or microwave and keep the door closed until it is cool. Unplug the appliance, if you can safely reach the wall outlet. After the fire, have the equipment checked and/or serviced before you use it again.

## **Microwave ovens**

- Place or install the microwave oven at a safe height within easy reach of all users. If possible, the face of the person using the microwave oven should be higher than the front of the microwave door to reduce the risk of a scald.
- Always supervise children when they are using the microwave oven.
- Use only microwave-safe cookware (containers or dishes). Never use aluminum foil or metal objects in a microwave.
- Open food cooked in a microwave slowly, away from the face. Hot steam escaping from a container of food cooked in the microwave or the food itself can cause burns.
- Never heat a baby bottle in a microwave, because it heats liquids unevenly. Heat baby bottles in warm water from the faucet.
- If your microwave is mounted over your stove, use extra caution.

## Barbecue grills

- Propane, charcoal, and wood pellet barbecue grills must be used only outdoors. Indoor use can kill occupants by either causing a fire or CO poisoning.
- Place the grill well away from siding and deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches. Do not store or use a grill on a porch or balcony, including any porch or balcony on an upper level of a building.
- Place the grill a safe distance from lawn games, play areas, and foot traffic.
- Have a three-foot kid and pet free zone around the grill.
- Use long-handled grilling tools to give the chef plenty of clearance from heat and flames.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in trays below the grill so it cannot be ignited by a hot grill.

## Charcoal grills

- Use one of the following methods to start charcoal for cooking:
  - ♦ If you use a “charcoal chimney” to start charcoal for cooking, use a long match to avoid burning your fingers when lighting the paper.
  - ♦ If you use an electrical charcoal starter be sure that you use a grounded extension cord.
  - ♦ If you choose to use lighter fluid, use only fluid intended for charcoal grills.
- Never add charcoal starter fluid when coals or kindling have already been ignited.
- Never use gasoline or any other flammable liquid to get the fire going.
- Have a three-foot kid and pet free zone around the grill.
- Store the charcoal starter fluid out of reach of children and away from heat sources.
- Dispose of charcoal coals only after they are cool. Empty the coals into a metal container with a tight-fitting lid that is only used to collect coals. Never empty coals directly into a trash can. Place away from anything that can burn.

## Propane grills

- Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year each time the tank is reconnected. A soap and water solution (1/3 liquid dish soap and 2/3 water) applied to the hose and connection will quickly reveal escaping propane by causing bubbles to form. If you determine there is a gas leak, do the following:
  - ♦ Turn off the gas tank and grill.
  - ♦ If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.
  - ♦ If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.
- Use only equipment with the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on how to set up the grill and maintain it.

- Always store propane gas tanks outside of buildings or garages. Vapors leaked indoors can be easily ignited by pilot lights or electric equipment, causing an explosion. If you store a gas grill inside during the winter, disconnect the cylinder and leave it outside.
- Only light a propane grill with the cover open.

## **Turkey fryers**

**NOTE:** Gas-fueled turkey fryers that immerse the turkey in hot oil are very dangerous. These turkey fryers use a substantial quantity of cooking oil at high temperatures, and units currently available for home use pose a significant danger that hot oil will be released at some point during the cooking process. The use of turkey fryers by consumers can lead to devastating burns or other injuries and the destruction of property.

- If you chose to use a turkey fryer, read and follow all manufacturer's instructions and safety warnings carefully.

## **Heating**

### **General heating**

- Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Supervise children whenever a wood or oil stove or other space heater is being used. Use a sturdy metal screen to prevent contact burns, which are more common than flame burns.
- All heaters need space. Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Use heating equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Never use your oven or stove for heating. Ovens and stoves are not designed to heat your home.
- Install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters, or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- Have a qualified professional install the equipment.
- Make sure all fuel-burning vented equipment is vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Carbon monoxide is created when fuels burn incompletely. Carbon monoxide poisoning can cause illness and even death. Make sure the venting for exhaust is kept clear and unobstructed. This includes removal of snow, ice, and other debris around the outlet to the outside.
- Install and maintain CO alarms that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory inside your home to provide early warning of carbon monoxide.
- Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected annually by a qualified professional.

## **Portable electric space heaters**

- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn in every direction.
- Turn heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.
- Only purchase and use portable space heaters that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory with an automatic shut-off so if they are tipped over they will shut off.
- Place portable space heaters on a solid, flat surface and keep them and their electrical cord away from things that can burn, high traffic areas, and doorways.
- Plug space heaters directly into wall outlets and never into an extension cord or power strip.
- Do not plug anything else into the same wall outlet as the one you are using for your space heater. Doing so could result in overheating.
- Check often for a secure plug/outlet fit. If the plug does not fit snugly into the wall outlet or if the plug becomes very hot, the wall outlet may need to be replaced. Have a qualified electrician replace the wall outlet.
- Inspect for cracked, frayed, or damaged cords; broken plugs; or loose connections. Replace before using the space heater.

## **Fuel burning space heaters**

- Always use the proper fuel as specified by the manufacturer.
- When refueling, allow the appliance to cool first and then refuel outside.
- When using the space heater, open a window to ensure proper ventilation.
- In portable kerosene or other liquid-fueled space heaters, always use the proper grade of the proper fuel for the heater.
- All new unvented gas-fired space heaters have an oxygen depletion sensor that detects a reduced level of oxygen in the area where the heater is operating and shuts off the heater before a hazardous level of carbon monoxide accumulates. If you have an older heater without this feature, replace it with one that does.
- If the pilot light of your gas heater goes out, allow 5 minutes or more for the gas to go away before trying again, do not allow gas to accumulate, and light the match before you turn on the gas to the pilot to avoid risk of flashback.
- If you smell gas in your gas heater, do not attempt to light the appliance. Leave the building immediately and call 9-1-1 or the gas company from outside.

## **Wood burning stoves**

- Have a qualified professional install stoves, chimney connectors, and chimneys following manufacturer's instructions.
- Wood stoves should bear the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- In wood stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood pellets.

- Start the fire with newspaper, kindling, or fire starters. Never use flammable liquids, such as lighter fluid, kerosene, gasoline, or diesel to start a fire. They produce invisible vapors that can easily catch fire.
- Keep the doors of your wood stove closed unless loading or stoking the fire.
- Allow ashes to cool before disposing. Place ashes in a tightly covered metal container and keep the ash container at least 10 feet away from the home and any other nearby buildings. Never empty the ash directly into a trash can. Douse and saturate the ashes with water.
- Chimneys and vents need to be cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional at least once a year.

## **Fireplaces**

- Always use a metal or heat-tempered glass screen on a fireplace and keep it in place.
- Burn only dry, seasoned wood. Not only is it cleaner for the environment, it also creates less buildup in the chimney.
- Use artificial logs according to manufacturer's recommendations. Never burn more than one log at a time.
- Use only newspaper, kindling wood, or fire starters to start a fire. Never use flammable liquids, such as lighter fluid, kerosene, gasoline, or diesel to start a fire. They produce invisible vapors that can easily catch fire.
- Chimneys and vents need to be cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional at least once a year.
- Keep children and pets away from the outside vents.
- Use chimineas, outdoor fireplaces, and fire pits outdoors only and at least 10 feet away from the home or anything that can burn.

## **Central heating**

- Furnaces need to be cleaned and serviced at least once a year by a qualified professional.
- Keep things that can burn at least 3 feet away from the furnace. Keep the furnace area clean and uncluttered.
- If you smell gas, do not light the appliance. Leave the building immediately and call 9-1-1 or the gas company from outside.

## **Fire pots, personal fireplaces, and patio torches**

- Fire pots, personal fireplaces, and patio torches are considered open flames and use gel fuel. Gel fuel is highly flammable. Use extreme caution when using or adding fuel.
- Never leave a lit fire pot, personal fireplace, or torch unattended.
- Keep these devices at least one foot away from anything that can burn.
- Place the fire pot or personal fireplace on a sturdy surface.
- Make sure patio torches are secure and not in the path of people or pets.

- Have a “kid-free zone” of at least three feet away from fire pots, personal fireplaces, and torches.
- Be careful reaching over the devices; clothing or hair could catch fire.
- Use only gel fuel to refuel.
- Citronella fuel is intended for outdoor use only
- Allow the device to cool for 30 to 45 minutes before refueling. Pouring gel fuel in a device that is not completely cool may result in a fire or injury.
- If gel fuel is spilled on clothing, remove the clothing and launder immediately.
- Store the gel fuel in its tightly sealed container away from heat sources and out of reach of children and pets.
- Stop, drop, and roll may not put out clothing that catches fire from gel fuel. A dry chemical fire extinguisher (if you have been trained to use it) can be used to extinguish the fire.

## **Medical oxygen**

- When medical oxygen or an oxygen tank is in use, the amount of oxygen in the air, furniture, clothing, hair, and bedding goes up, making it easier for a fire to start and spread. This means that there is a higher risk of both fires and burns.
- A patient on oxygen should not smoke
- Never smoke in a home where medical oxygen is used. Medical oxygen can cause material to ignite more easily and make fires burn at a faster rate than normal. It can make an existing fire burn faster and hotter.
- Post “No Smoking” and “No Open Flames” signs in and outside of the home to remind residents and guests not to smoke.
- Keep oxygen cylinders at least five feet from a heat source, open flames, or electrical devices.
- Never use a candle, match, lighter, or other open flame; a fireplace, stove, or other device fueled by gas, kerosene, wood, or coal; a sparking toy; or smoke in a home where medical oxygen is used.
- Keep oil and grease away from where oxygen is in use. Body oil, hand lotion, and items containing oil and grease can easily ignite.
- Never use aerosol sprays containing combustible materials near oxygen.

## **Electrical**

- Electrical work should be done only by a qualified electrician. Some communities require that a person doing electrical work have a license. Find out about the laws in your area.

## **Inside the home**

- Have your home electrical system inspected when buying, selling, or renovating a home.

- Keep lamps, light fixtures, and light bulbs away from anything that can burn, including furniture, bedding, curtains, clothing, and flammable or combustible gases and liquids.
- Use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or fixture.
- If a fuse blows or a circuit breaker trips often, have a qualified electrician inspect and correct it before turning the breaker back on or replacing the fuse.
- Always replace blown fuses with ones of the proper rating. If the problem continues, call an electrician.
- Major appliances (refrigerators, stoves, washers, dryers, etc.) should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Never use an extension cord; it can be easily overloaded.
- Small appliances should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Unplug small appliances when not in use.
- Window air conditioners should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Many manufacturers of room air conditioners prohibit the use of extension cords. If manufacturer's instructions allow extension cords, follow the instructions for the proper type.
- Buy only appliances that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Check electrical cords often. Replace cracked, damaged, and loose electrical cords. Do not try to repair them.
- Avoid putting cords where they can be damaged or pinched by furniture, under rugs and carpets, or across doorways.
- Use only surge protectors or power strips that have internal overload protection and the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Extension cords are for temporary use only. Have a qualified electrician determine if additional circuits or wall outlets are needed.
- Replace wall outlets if plugs do not fit snugly or the wall outlet does not accept plugs with one blade larger than the other.
- Cover wall outlets and switches with wall plates to prevent shocks.
- If you have young children install tamper-resistant electrical outlets. Where replacement is not possible, install new protective outlet covers, which do not allow a child to insert an object into the wall outlet.
- Call a qualified electrician if you have:
  - ♦ recurring problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers
  - ♦ a tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance
  - ♦ discolored or warm wall outlets or switches
  - ♦ a burning smell or rubbery odor coming from an appliance
  - ♦ flickering lights
  - ♦ sparks from a wall outlet
  - ♦ cracked or broken wall outlets
- Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) are a type of circuit breaker that shuts off electricity when a dangerous condition occurs. Have a qualified electrician install them in your home.
- Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) reduce the risk of shock. GFCIs shut off electricity when it becomes a shock hazard. Make sure GFCIs are installed in

bathrooms, basements, garages, outdoors, at kitchen counters, and other locations in the home where electricity is near water.

- Test AFCIs and GFCIs once a month by pushing the test button to make sure they are working properly.

## **Outside the home**

- Keep ladders at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.
- Never touch a power line— you could be electrocuted. Assume that all power lines are live. Stay at a safe distance.
- Never touch a person who is in contact with a downed wire.
- Report downed power lines to authorities.
- Some power lines are underground. Call your local authority to have lines identified and marked before digging. You can also call the national 8-1-1 “Call before you dig” number.

## **Outdoor burning**

- Check with your local fire department or municipality for any restrictions before starting an open air, recreational, or outdoor cooking fire. This includes campfires, brush fires, fire pits, chimeneas, and outdoor fireplaces. Obtain proper permits, if required. You may not be permitted to do outdoor burning in some municipalities and during some seasons of the year.
- Closely supervise all outdoor fires. Make sure the fire is out before leaving.
- Supervise children around any outdoor fire.
- Use chimeneas, outdoor fireplaces, and fire pits outdoors only and at least 25 feet away from the home or anything that can burn.
- Permitted open fires need to be at least 50 feet from anything that can burn.
- Avoid burning on windy, dry days. When conditions are windy or dry, it is too easy for open burning to spread out of control.
- Where outdoor burning is allowed, never use gasoline or other flammable or combustible liquids.
- Have a hose, bucket of water, or shovel and dirt or sand nearby when burning to extinguish the fire.

## **Lightning**

### **Indoor safety**

- Stay off corded phones, computers, and other electronic equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity or plumbing.
- Avoid washing your hands, showering, bathing, doing laundry, or washing dishes.
- Stay away from windows and doors.
- If lights go out, use only battery-powered lights in homes, tents, trailers, motor homes, and boats.

## Outdoor safety

- Seek shelter immediately in a building or a hard-topped vehicle.
- If you are in or on open water, go to land and seek shelter immediately.
- If you can't get to shelter and you feel your hair stand on end, indicating that lightning is about to strike, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground. **This is a last resort when a building or hard-topped vehicle is not available.**
- If a person is struck by lightning, call 9-1-1 and get medical care immediately. Lightning strike victims carry no electrical charge; attend to them immediately. Administer CPR if needed.

## Clothes dryers

- Use the right plug and wall outlet. Make sure the machine is connected properly.
- Use rigid or flexible metal venting material to sustain proper air flow and drying time to reduce the risk of fire or fire spread.
- Make sure the air exhaust vent is not restricted and the outdoor vent flap will open when the dryer is operating.
- Have your dryer installed and serviced by a professional.
- Keep dryers in good working order. Gas dryers should be inspected by a professional to make sure that the gas line and connection are intact and free of leaks.
- Do not use the dryer without a lint filter.
- Clean the dryer's lint filter before and after each load of laundry. Remove the lint that has collected around the drum.
- Follow the manufacturer's operating instructions. Do not overload the dryer.
- Turn off the dryer when you leave home or go to bed.
- Clean lint out of the vent pipe quarterly or more often if you notice that it is taking longer than usual for your clothes to dry, or have a dryer lint removal service do it for you.

## Fire extinguishers

**NOTE:** Teaching any non-professional to use fire extinguishers is not recommended. If you do, use extreme caution.

- Firefighting should be left to the fire department.
- Only use a fire extinguisher if you have been trained. Learn and practice how to use fire extinguishers **before** a fire occurs.
- Fire extinguishers have limits. Never try to extinguish a fire that is larger than a small trash can.
- Before trying to fight a fire, make sure everyone is leaving the house, someone is calling 9-1-1, you can get out, and you are using the proper fire extinguisher.
- If the fire does not go out after using one extinguisher, **GET OUT!**

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height. A person should not have to travel far (more than 40 feet) to reach one and should never have to travel up or down stairs to reach it.
- Fire extinguishers for the home should have a rating of at least 2-A:10-B:C.
- Inspect fire extinguishers monthly and have them serviced annually.

## **Tips & Techniques**

- **Remember these are young adults.** They will have the same messages as adults; however, they have only been living on their own for a short time. College students are also more likely to live in dorms or rental property. They also are more likely to engage in riskier behavior than adults with their own home and a family.
- **Try to accommodate their busy schedule.** Try to partner with another event to reduce the time away from their busy lives.
- **Stress the importance of smoking safety and the added risk of alcohol and drug use.**
- **Props**
  - ♦ The State Fire Marshal's Office has a Fire Safety House, a mobile unit that simulates the kitchen and bedroom of a house. Equipped with heated doors, smoke alarms, sprinkler heads, smoking appliances, and a fire escape ladder it is used to teach audiences of all ages exit drills, smoke alarm use and maintenance, the proper way to exit a burning house, and fire extinguisher use. For more information or to schedule an event with the Fire Safety House, please contact the Fire Safety Education Division at 888-900-7414.
  - ♦ The Sparky's Hazard House is a dollhouse-like tabletop prop that can be used to teach hazards in the home. It is available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.
  - ♦ 9-1-1 simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.

# Adults

## 9-1-1

- Use 9-1-1 only for emergencies.
- In a fire emergency, always call 9-1-1 **after** you escape a burning building.

### Tips

- Use a 9-1-1 simulator or unplugged phone to allow the audience to practice calling. Simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.

### Information to give the emergency operator

- Stay calm.
- Tell the 9-1-1 operator your address.
- Tell the 9-1-1 operator the address of the emergency.
- Tell the 9-1-1 operator what the emergency is.
- Answer all questions you are asked.
- Stay on the phone until the 9-1-1 operator tells you to hang up.

## Smoke alarms

### Installation

- Every home must have working smoke alarms.
  - Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a home fire in half.
- Smoke alarms should be installed in every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of the home, including the basement. Larger homes may require additional smoke alarms to provide a minimum level of protection.
- For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home; when one sounds, they all sound. Wireless battery-operated interconnected smoke alarms are now available.
- An ionization smoke alarm is generally more responsive to flaming fires; a photoelectric smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires. For the best protection or where extra time is needed to awaken or assist others both types of alarms or combination ionization and photoelectric alarms (also known as dual sensor alarms) are recommended.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows the sound of the smoke alarm and how to respond.
- Choose a smoke alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.

- Smoke alarms should be installed away from the kitchen to prevent false alarms. Generally, they should be at least 10 feet away from a cooking appliance.
- A smoke alarm installed within 10 to 20 feet of a cooking appliance should be a photoelectric type to reduce false alarms or have a hush feature which temporarily reduces the sensitivity of the alarm.

### **Testing and maintenance**

- Test smoke alarms in accordance with manufacturer's instructions at least once a month.
- Use care to prevent falls when using step stools and ladders to test a smoke alarm.
  - ♦ To avoid climbing, suggest using a broom handle to test the alarm.
  - ♦ Some smoke alarms are designed to be tested with a television remote to reduce the risk of falls.
- Dust or vacuum smoke alarms annually and/or whenever the battery is changed.
  - ♦ Follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.

### **Deaf or hard of hearing**

- Smoke alarms and alert devices, called accessories, are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Choose smoke alarms and accessories that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Research the available products, and select one that best meets your individual needs.
- Strobe lights installed throughout the home of people who are deaf are activated by smoke alarms and alert them to fire conditions. When people who are deaf are asleep, a high intensity strobe light along with a pillow or bed shaker is required to wake them up and alert them to fire conditions so they can escape. Newer technology equipment is activated by the sound of a standard smoke alarm.
- Accessories that produce a loud, mixed low-pitched sound are usually installed next to the bed of people who are hard of hearing. This equipment is activated by the sound of the smoke alarm. People who are hard of hearing may find that a pillow or bed shaker is also effective to wake them up.
- Recent research has shown that a loud, mixed low-pitched sound is more effective for waking people of all ages than the loud, high-pitched sound of a traditional smoke alarm. As people age, their ability to hear high-pitched sounds decreases.

### **Sleeping with bedroom door open or closed**

- Make sure everyone can hear the sound of the smoke alarms and knows what your smoke alarms sound like.
- If you sleep with bedroom doors closed, have interconnected smoke alarms.

### **Smoke alarm replacement**

- Replace all smoke alarms (including hard-wired) when they are 10 years old.
- Immediately replace any smoke alarm that does not respond properly when tested.

- Combination smoke-carbon monoxide alarms should be replaced according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

## **Battery replacement**

- Smoke alarms with sealed, long-life batteries are designed to remain effective for 10 years. If the alarm chirps, warning that the battery is low, replace the entire smoke alarm right away.
- Replace the battery in an unsealed, long-life battery smoke alarm when it chirps warning that the battery is low.
- For smoke alarms with any other type of battery, replace batteries at least once a year. If that alarm chirps, replace only the battery.

## **Rental units**

- All rental units need working smoke alarms.
- Check with your local fire or building department for state and local ordinances on smoke alarm installation and maintenance in rental units.
- If you rent and do not have working smoke alarms, contact your landlord or property manager immediately about having them installed.
- If after you have contacted your landlord or property manager smoke alarms remain uninstalled, consider installing them yourself or having someone install them for you. Some fire departments will install smoke alarms for you.
- If the smoke alarms are not working the battery or the smoke alarm itself may need to be replaced. This may be the responsibility of you or the landlord depending on your rental agreement.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month.
- Make sure everyone in the home understands the warning of the smoke alarm and how to respond.
- Dust or vacuum smoke alarms annually and/or whenever the battery is changed. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.

## **Disposal of smoke alarms**

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offers information on the safe disposal of smoke alarms at [www.epa.gov/radiation/sources/smoke\\_dispose.htm](http://www.epa.gov/radiation/sources/smoke_dispose.htm).

## **Home fire sprinklers**

- Sprinklers protect lives and property by keeping fires small. Because the sprinkler system reacts so quickly, it can dramatically reduce the heat, flames, and smoke produced in a fire, allowing people time to escape safely.
- Sprinklers activate independently. Only the sprinkler closest to the fire will activate, spraying water directly on the fire, not the rest of the house.
- A sprinkler will control or put out a fire with a fraction of the water that would be used by fire department hoses.

- Accidental sprinkler discharges are extremely rare.
- Home fire sprinklers can be installed in new or existing homes. If you are building or remodeling your home, install a home fire sprinkler system.
- It is especially important to install a home fire sprinkler system in homes with persons who may not be able to get out without help, such as people with disabilities, young children, or older adults.

## **Installation**

- Have a qualified contractor install your home fire sprinkler system according to local codes, standards, and fire safety regulations.
- Home fire sprinklers work along with smoke alarms to save lives. NPFA data shows that home fire sprinklers cut the risk of dying in a home fire by 80%.

## **Maintenance**

- The home fire sprinkler installer must provide instructions on inspecting, testing, and maintaining the system. It is a simple process that can be performed by the home occupant. A simple visual inspection should be done monthly to ensure the water valve on the sprinkler is open.
- Periodic visual inspection of all sprinklers should be done monthly to make sure nothing is blocking them and nothing is hung on or attached to them.
- Do a water flow test on the sprinkler system every six months or have a fire sprinkler contractor do the test to ensure all water flow devices are working.
- Keep sprinklers clear and free of objects that can interfere with their proper use.
- Inspect tanks, if present, monthly to make sure they are full.
- Where a pump is used, start it every month to make sure that it works and that it does not trip any circuit breakers.
- Whenever painting, make sure sprinklers are not painted by covering them with a bag, which should be removed immediately after the work is done.

## **Carbon monoxide**

### **Dangers of carbon monoxide**

- Carbon monoxide (CO), often called the “silent killer”, is a gas you cannot see, taste, or smell. It is created when fuels (such as kerosene, gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, methane, etc) do not burn properly. Exposure to undetected high levels of carbon monoxide can be fatal.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning can result from faulty furnaces or other heating appliances, portable generators, water heaters, clothes dryers, or cars left running in garages.
- Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning may include headache, nausea, and drowsiness.
- Exposure to undetected high levels of carbon monoxide can be fatal, causing death within minutes.

## **Installation**

- Choose a CO alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each separate sleeping area, on every level of the home, and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes, or standards. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Combination smoke/CO alarms must be installed in accordance with the requirements for smoke alarms.
- CO alarms are not substitutes for smoke alarms and vice versa. Know the difference between the sound of smoke alarms and the sound of CO alarms.

## **Testing and replacement**

- Test CO alarms at least once a month and replace CO alarms if they fail to respond correctly when tested. Replace the CO alarm according to the manufacturer's instructions or when the end-of-life signal sounds.
- Know the difference between the sound of the CO alarm and the smoke alarm, and their low-battery signals. If the audible low-battery signal sounds, replace the batteries or replace the device. If it still sounds, get to a fresh air location. Call 9-1-1 from a neighbor's house or cell phone.
- To keep CO alarms working well, follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.

## **Carbon monoxide precautions**

### **Inside the home**

- Have fuel-burning heating equipment (fireplaces, furnaces, water heaters, wood and coal stoves, space or portable heaters) and chimneys inspected by a professional every year.
- Open the damper for proper ventilation before using the fireplace.
- Never use your oven or stovetop to heat your home. The CO might kill people and pets.
- When purchasing new heating and cooking equipment, select products tested and labeled by a recognized testing laboratory.
- Make sure all fuel-burning vented equipment is vented to the outside to avoid CO poisoning. Keep the venting for exhaust clear and unblocked.

### **Outside the home**

- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Never run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not blocked with snow, ice, or other materials. The CO might kill people and pets.

- Make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow and other debris.
- Only use barbecue grills, which can produce carbon monoxide, outside away from all doors, windows, vents, and other building openings. Never use them in the home, garage, or near building openings.
- Use only battery-powered lights in homes, tents, trailers, motor homes, and motor boats.

### **Portable generators**

- Use portable generators outdoors in well-ventilated areas away from all doors, windows, vents, and other building openings to prevent exhaust fumes from entering the home.
- When using portable generators, install CO alarms in the home according to the manufacturer's installation instructions.

### **If your CO alarm sounds**

- Immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for.
- Call 9-1-1 from a fresh air location (outdoors or by an open window). Remain at a fresh air location until emergency personnel arrives to assist you.

## **Home fire escape**

### **Plan**

- Make a home escape plan. Draw a map of each level of the home. Show all doors and windows. Discuss the plan with everyone in your household, including visitors.
- Children, older adults, and people with disabilities may need assistance to wake up and get out. Ensure that someone will help them. Have a plan for everyone in your home who has a disability.
- Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible. Make sure all doors and windows that lead outside open easily.
- If you have a window air conditioner, make sure there is still a second way out of the room.
- Windows with security bars, grilles, and window guards should have emergency release devices.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows how to call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or from a neighbor's phone.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows the sound and understands the warning of the smoke alarms and how to respond.
- Have an outside meeting place (something permanent, like a tree, light pole, or mailbox) a safe distance in front of the home.
- Make sure your house number can be seen day or night from the street.

- If you have escape ladders for escaping from the second and third floors, make sure they are listed by a recognized testing laboratory. Make sure the escape ladder fits the window. Use only if all other exits are blocked. To prevent injury from a fall, use the ladder only in a real emergency.
- Teach your children how to escape on their own in case you cannot help them.

## **Practice**

- Practice the plan with everyone in your home twice a year and at least once at night with the lights off.
- Practice the plan with overnight guests.
- Push the smoke alarm button to start the drill.
- Practice what to do in case there is smoke.
- Get low and go.
- Get out fast.
- Practice using different ways out.
- Close doors behind you as you leave.
- Go to your outside meeting place.
- Practice opening your home escape ladder and dropping it out the window, but not using it.
- After you practice, evaluate your home fire drill and discuss what worked and what could be improved. Improve it and practice again.

## **If there is a fire**

- When the smoke alarm sounds, get out fast. You may have only seconds to escape safely.
- If there is smoke blocking your door or first way out, use your second way out.
- Smoke is toxic. If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your way out.
- Before opening a door, feel the door and doorknob. If either is hot, leave the door closed and use your second way out.
- If you open a door, open it slowly. Be ready to shut it quickly if heavy smoke or fire is present.
- Close doors behind you as you leave.
- Get out and stay out. Never go back inside for any reason.
- If you can't get to someone needing assistance, leave the home and call 9-1-1. Tell the emergency operator where the person is located.
- If pets are trapped inside your home, tell firefighters right away.
- If you can't get out, close the door, and cover vents and cracks around doors with cloth or tape to keep smoke out. Call 9-1-1. Stay where you are and signal for help at the window with a light-colored cloth or flashlight.
- Go to your outside meeting place.
- Call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or neighbor's house.

## **Hotels/Motels**

- Choose a hotel that is protected by both smoke alarms and fire sprinklers.
- When you check in, ask the desk clerk what the fire alarm sounds like. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, ask for a room equipped with a smoke alarm and accessories that will awaken you, or a portable smoke alarm made specifically for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to place in your room. You may want to consider taking one with you.
- Read the escape plan posted in your room.
- Count the number of doors between your room and the nearest two fire exits. Open the exit doors to be sure they're unlocked.
- Keep your room key by your bed and take it with you if there is a fire. If you cannot escape, you may have to return to your room.
- If you hear an alarm leave immediately, closing all doors behind you.
- Use the stairs – never use elevators during a fire.
- If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your exit.
- If all escape routes are blocked, return to your room. Shut off fans and air conditioners. Stuff wet towels or bedding in the crack around the doors and vents. Call 9-1-1 to let them know your location. Wait at a window and signal for help with a flashlight or light-colored cloth.
- Take a flashlight; keep it near your bed.

## **If you are on fire**

- If your clothes catch fire, stop immediately.
- Drop to the ground.
- Cover your face with your hands.
- Roll over and over or back and forth to put out the fire.
- If you cannot stop, drop, and roll, keep a blanket or towel nearby to help you or others smother flames. Cover the person with a blanket to smother the fire. If you use a wheelchair, scooter, or other device and are able to get to the floor, lock the device first to stay in place before getting on the floor to roll until the flames are out.
- Cool a burn right away by putting it in cool water for three to five minutes.
  - Cover the burn with a clean, dry cloth.
  - Do not apply creams, ointments, sprays, or other home remedies.
  - Get medical help right away by calling 9-1-1.

## **Burns**

### **Prevent scalds and burns in the kitchen**

- Teach children that hot things burn.
- Place hot objects so they cannot be pulled down or knocked over.
- Turn pot handles away from the stove's edge.
- Keep appliance cords coiled and away from counter edges.

- Keep hot foods and liquids away from table and counter edges.
- Use dry oven mitts or potholders. Hot cookware or tableware can heat moisture in a hot pad resulting in a scald burn.
- If you have young children in the home, cook on the stove's back burners.
- When children are old enough, teach them to cook safely.

## **Hot tap water and scald burns**

- Set your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- When bathing or taking a shower, the temperature of the water should not exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Consider installing “anti-scald” devices on tub faucets and shower heads to prevent scalds.
- If you do not install “anti-scald” devices on tub faucets and shower heads, adjust the thermostat setting on your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. The lower temperature lowers the risk of scalds and burns.
- If you lower the temperature setting on your water heater, you will need to test the temperature at the faucet. Allow water to run three to five minutes. Test the water with a meat, candy, or cooking thermometer. If the water is hotter than 120 degrees Fahrenheit, adjust the temperature of the water heater and wait a full day to allow the temperature in the tank to adjust. Retest and adjust as needed.
- If children are in the home, don't leave the bathroom while the tub is filling.
- Before placing a child in the bath or getting into the tub yourself, test the water.
- Fill the tub or sink by running cool water first and then adding hot water. Turn hot water off first. Mix the water thoroughly and check the temperature by moving your hand, wrist, and forearm through the water. The water should feel warm to the touch.
- When bathing a young child, seat the child facing away from the faucets so the child cannot reach the faucet. Turn the faucet to the “COLD” position.
- Never leave a child unattended in a tub of water.

## **Treatment of burns**

- Cool a burn right away by putting it in cool water for three to five minutes.
- Cover with a clean, dry cloth. Do not apply creams, ointments, sprays, or other home remedies.
- Remove all clothing, diapers, jewelry, and metal from the burned area. These can hide underlying burns and retain heat, thereby increasing skin damage.
- Call 9-1-1 or see your doctor if the burn is:
  - ♦ on the face, hands, feet, major joints, or genital area and /or bigger than the injured person's palm
  - ♦ white, tight, dry (leathery), or painless
  - ♦ caused by chemicals or electricity
  - ♦ causing difficulty breathing
- See a doctor as soon as possible if the burn:
  - ♦ does not heal in 2 to 3 days

- ♦ becomes foul smelling
- ♦ develops thick drainage, redness, or swelling
- ♦ causes fever

## Matches and lighters

- Keep matches and lighters up high, out of the reach of children, in a locked cabinet.
- Purchase and use only child-resistant lighters.
- Teach young children to tell a grown-up if they find matches or lighters, and never to touch them.
- Lighters that look like toys can confuse children. Do not buy or use them.
  - ♦ Beginning July 1, 2010, sale of toy-like lighters is banned in Mississippi.

## Smoking

- If you smoke, use only fire-safe cigarettes.
- To prevent a deadly cigarette fire, you must be alert. You are not alert if you are sleepy, have taken medicine or drugs that makes you drowsy, or consumed alcohol.
- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- Wherever you smoke, use deep, sturdy ashtrays. If ashtrays are not available, use a metal can or pail. Never empty smoking materials directly into a trash can. Place away from anything that can burn.
- Before you throw out butts and ashes, make sure they are out by dousing in water or sand.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Never smoke where medical oxygen is used. Medical oxygen can cause materials to ignite more easily and make fire burn at a faster rate than normal. It can make an existing fire burn faster and hotter.
- Before going to bed, check under furniture cushions and in other places people smoke for cigarette butts that may have fallen out of sight.
- Do not extinguish or throw cigarettes in vegetation, potted plants, landscaping, peat moss, dried grasses, mulch, leaves, and other similar items; they can easily catch fire.
- Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, and other smoking materials up high out of the reach of children, in a locked cabinet.

## Candles

- Consider using battery-operated flameless candles.
- When using candles, place them in sturdy, safe candleholders that will not burn.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.
- Never use a candle when medical oxygen is being used.
- Protect candle flames with glass chimneys or containers.
- Avoid using candles in bedrooms and sleeping areas.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Extinguish candles when you leave a room.

- Be careful not to splatter wax when extinguishing a candle. Using a candle snuffer is safer than blowing the candle out.
- Always use a flashlight, not a candle, for emergency lighting.
- Use only battery-powered lights in tents, trailers, motor homes, and boats.

## **Cooking**

### **Choose safe cooking equipment.**

- Always use cooking equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions and code requirements when installing, cleaning, and operating cooking equipment.
- Plug microwave ovens or other cooking appliances directly into a wall outlet. Never use an extension cord for a cooking appliance as it can overload the circuit and cause a fire.
- Check electrical cords for cracks, breaks, damage, or overheating. Have a professional repair the appliance or cord as needed or replace the appliance.

### **Stay alert**

- To prevent cooking fires, you must be alert. You are not alert if you are sleepy, have taken medicine or drugs that make you drowsy, or have consumed alcohol.

### **Watch what you heat**

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.

### **Keep things that can catch fire away from heat sources**

- Keep things that can catch on fire (oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels, or curtains) away from your stovetop.
- Don't store things that can catch on fire in an oven or toaster oven.
- Keep the stovetop, burners, and oven clean.
- Wear short, close-fitting, or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire if it comes in contact with a gas flame or an electric burner.

## **Keep kids and pets away from the cooking area**

- Have a “kid-free zone” of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.
- Never hold a child while you are cooking, drinking a hot liquid, or carrying hot foods or liquids.
- Keep pets off cooking surfaces and nearby countertops to prevent them from knocking things onto the burner.

## **What to do if you have a cooking fire**

- When in doubt, just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire. After you leave, call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or a neighbor’s telephone.
- If you are trained and decide to fight the fire, be sure others are already getting out and you have a clear path to the exit.
- Always keep a lid that fits the pan or cookie sheet and an oven mitt nearby when you cook.
- If a small fire starts in a pan, smother the fire by carefully sliding the lid or cookie sheet over the pan while wearing your oven mitt. Turn off the burner. Do not move the pan. To keep the fire from restarting, keep the lid on until the pan is completely cool.
- Never pour water on a grease fire.
- Never discharge a fire extinguisher directly into a pan fire because it can spread the fire.
- In case of an oven or microwave fire, turn off the oven or microwave and keep the door closed until it is cool. Unplug the appliance, if you can safely reach the wall outlet. After the fire, have the equipment checked and/or serviced before you use it again.

## **Microwave ovens**

- Place or install the microwave oven at a safe height within easy reach of all users. If possible, the face of the person using the microwave oven should be higher than the front of the microwave door to reduce the risk of a scald.
- Always supervise children when they are using the microwave oven.
- Use only microwave-safe cookware (containers or dishes). Never use aluminum foil or metal objects in a microwave oven.
- Open food cooked in a microwave slowly, away from the face. Hot steam escaping from a container of food cooked in the microwave or the food itself can cause burns.
- Never heat a baby bottle in a microwave oven, because it heats liquids unevenly. Heat baby bottles in warm water from the faucet.
- If your microwave is mounted over your stove, use extra caution.

## Barbecue grills

- Propane, charcoal, and wood pellet barbecue grills must be used only outdoors. Indoor use can kill occupants by either causing a fire or CO poisoning.
- Place the grill well away from siding and deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches. Do not store or use a grill on a porch or balcony, including any porch or balcony on an upper level of a building.
- Place the grill a safe distance from lawn games, play areas, and foot traffic.
- Have a three-foot kid and pet free zone around the grill.
- Use long-handled grilling tools to give the chef plenty of clearance from heat and flames.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in trays below the grill so it cannot be ignited by a hot grill.

## Charcoal grills

- Use one of the following methods to start charcoal for cooking:
  - ♦ If you use a “charcoal chimney” to start charcoal for cooking, use a long match to avoid burning your fingers when lighting the paper.
  - ♦ If you use an electrical charcoal starter be sure that you use a grounded extension cord.
  - ♦ If you choose to use lighter fluid, use only fluid intended for charcoal grills.
- Never add charcoal starter fluid when coals or kindling have already been ignited.
- Never use gasoline or any other flammable liquid to get the fire going.
- Have a three-foot kid and pet free zone around the grill.
- Store the charcoal starter fluid out of reach of children and away from heat sources.
- Dispose of charcoal coals only after they are cool. Empty the coals into a metal container with a tight-fitting lid that is only used to collect coals. Never empty coals directly into a trash can. Place away from anything that can burn.

## Propane grills

- Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year each time the tank is reconnected. A soap and water solution (1/3 liquid dish soap and 2/3 water) applied to the hose and connection will quickly reveal escaping propane by causing bubbles to form. If you determine there is a gas leak, do the following:
  - ♦ Turn off the gas tank and grill.
  - ♦ If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.
  - ♦ If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.
- Use only equipment with the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on how to set up the grill and maintain it.

- Always store propane gas tanks outside of buildings or garages. Vapors leaked indoors can be easily ignited by pilot lights or electric equipment, causing an explosion. If you store a gas grill inside during the winter, disconnect the cylinder and leave it outside.
- Only light a propane grill with the cover open.

## Turkey fryers

**NOTE:** Gas-fueled turkey fryers that immerse the turkey in hot oil are very dangerous. These turkey fryers use a substantial quantity of cooking oil at high temperatures, and units currently available for home use pose a significant danger that hot oil will be released at some point during the cooking process. The use of turkey fryers by consumers can lead to devastating burns or other injuries and the destruction of property.

- If you chose to use a turkey fryer, read and follow all manufacturer's instructions and safety warnings carefully.

## Heating

### General heating

- Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Supervise children whenever a wood or oil stove or other space heater is being used. Use a sturdy metal screen to prevent contact burns, which are more common than flame burns.
- All heaters need space. Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Use heating equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Never use your oven or stove for heating. Ovens and stoves are not designed to heat your home.
- Install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters, or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- Have a qualified professional install the equipment.
- Make sure all fuel-burning vented equipment is vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Carbon monoxide is created when fuels burn incompletely. Carbon monoxide poisoning can cause illness and even death. Make sure the venting for exhaust is kept clear and unobstructed. This includes removal of snow, ice, and other debris around the outlet to the outside.
- Install and maintain CO alarms that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory inside your home to provide early warning of carbon monoxide.
- Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected annually by a qualified professional.

## **Portable electric space heaters**

- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn in every direction.
- Turn heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.
- Only purchase and use portable space heaters that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory with an automatic shut-off so if they are tipped over they will shut off.
- Place portable space heaters on a solid, flat surface and keep them and their electrical cord away from things that can burn, high traffic areas, and doorways.
- Plug space heaters directly into wall outlets and never into an extension cord or power strip.
- Do not plug anything else into the same wall outlet as the one you are using for your space heater. Doing so could result in overheating.
- Check often for a secure plug/outlet fit. If the plug does not fit snugly into the wall outlet or if the plug becomes very hot, the wall outlet may need to be replaced. Have a qualified electrician replace the wall outlet.
- Inspect for cracked, frayed, or damaged cords; broken plugs; or loose connections. Replace before using the space heater.

## **Fuel burning space heaters**

- Always use the proper fuel as specified by the manufacturer.
- When refueling, allow the appliance to cool first and then refuel outside.
- When using the space heater, open a window to ensure proper ventilation.
- In portable kerosene or other liquid-fueled space heaters, always use the proper grade of the proper fuel for the heater.
- All new unvented gas-fired space heaters have an oxygen depletion sensor that detects a reduced level of oxygen in the area where the heater is operating and shuts off the heater before a hazardous level of carbon monoxide accumulates. If you have an older heater without this feature, replace it with one that does.
- If the pilot light of your gas heater goes out, allow 5 minutes or more for the gas to go away before trying again, do not allow gas to accumulate, and light the match before you turn on the gas to the pilot to avoid risk of flashback.
- If you smell gas in your gas heater, do not attempt to light the appliance. Leave the building immediately and call 9-1-1 or the gas company from outside.

## **Wood burning stoves**

- Have a qualified professional install stoves, chimney connectors, and chimneys following manufacturer's instructions.
- Wood stoves should bear the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- In wood stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood pellets.

- Start the fire with newspaper, kindling, or fire starters. Never use flammable liquids, such as lighter fluid, kerosene, gasoline, or diesel to start a fire. They produce invisible vapors that can easily catch fire.
- Keep the doors of your wood stove closed unless loading or stoking the fire.
- Allow ashes to cool before disposing. Place ashes in a tightly covered metal container and keep the ash container at least 10 feet away from the home and any other nearby buildings. Never empty the ash directly into a trash can. Douse and saturate the ashes with water.
- Chimneys and vents need to be cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional at least once a year.

## **Fireplaces**

- Always use a metal or heat-tempered glass screen on a fireplace and keep it in place.
- Burn only dry, seasoned wood. Not only is it cleaner for the environment, it also creates less buildup in the chimney.
- Use artificial logs according to manufacturer's recommendations. Never burn more than one log at a time.
- Use only newspaper, kindling wood, or fire starters to start a fire. Never use flammable liquids, such as lighter fluid, kerosene, gasoline, or diesel to start a fire. They produce invisible vapors that can easily catch fire.
- Chimneys and vents need to be cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional at least once a year.
- Keep children and pets away from the outside vents.
- Use chimineas, outdoor fireplaces, and fire pits outdoors only and at least 10 feet away from the home or anything that can burn.

## **Central heating**

- Furnaces need to be cleaned and serviced at least once a year by a qualified professional.
- Keep things that can burn at least 3 feet away from the furnace. Keep the furnace area clean and uncluttered.
- If you smell gas, do not light the appliance. Leave the building immediately and call 9-1-1 or the gas company from outside.

## **Fire pots, personal fireplaces, and patio torches**

- Fire pots, personal fireplaces, and patio torches are considered open flames and use gel fuel. Gel fuel is highly flammable. Use extreme caution when using or adding fuel.
- Never leave a lit fire pot, personal fireplace, or torch unattended.
- Keep these devices at least one foot away from anything that can burn.
- Place the fire pot or personal fireplace on a sturdy surface.
- Make sure patio torches are secure and not in the path of people or pets.

- Have a “kid-free zone” of at least three feet away from fire pots, personal fireplaces, and torches.
- Be careful reaching over the devices; clothing or hair could catch fire.
- Use only gel fuel to refuel.
- Citronella fuel is intended for outdoor use only
- Allow the device to cool for 30 to 45 minutes before refueling. Pouring gel fuel in a device that is not completely cool may result in a fire or injury.
- If gel fuel is spilled on clothing, remove the clothing and launder immediately.
- Store the gel fuel in its tightly sealed container away from heat sources and out of reach of children and pets.
- Stop, drop, and roll may not put out clothing that catches fire from gel fuel. A dry chemical fire extinguisher (if you have been trained to use it) can be used to extinguish the fire.

## **Medical oxygen**

- When medical oxygen or an oxygen tank is in use, the amount of oxygen in the air, furniture, clothing, hair, and bedding goes up, making it easier for a fire to start and spread. This means that there is a higher risk of both fires and burns.
- A patient on oxygen should not smoke
- Never smoke in a home where medical oxygen is used. Medical oxygen can cause material to ignite more easily and make fires burn at a faster rate than normal. It can make an existing fire burn faster and hotter.
- Post “No Smoking” and “No Open Flames” signs in and outside of the home to remind residents and guests not to smoke.
- Keep oxygen cylinders at least five feet from a heat source, open flames, or electrical devices.
- Never use a candle, match, lighter, or other open flame; a fireplace, stove, or other device fueled by gas, kerosene, wood, or coal; a sparking toy; or smoke in a home where medical oxygen is used.
- Keep oil and grease away from where oxygen is in use. Body oil, hand lotion, and items containing oil and grease can easily ignite.
- Never use aerosol sprays containing combustible materials near oxygen.

## **Electrical**

- Electrical work should be done only by a qualified electrician. Some communities require that a person doing electrical work have a license. Find out about the laws in your area.

### **Inside the home**

- Have your home electrical system inspected when buying, selling, or renovating a home.

- Keep lamps, light fixtures, and light bulbs away from anything that can burn, including furniture, bedding, curtains, clothing, and flammable or combustible gases and liquids.
- Use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or fixture.
- If a fuse blows or a circuit breaker trips often, have a qualified electrician inspect and correct it before turning the breaker back on or replacing the fuse.
- Always replace blown fuses with ones of the proper rating. If the problem continues, call an electrician.
- Major appliances (refrigerators, stoves, washers, dryers, etc.) should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Never use an extension cord; it can be easily overloaded.
- Small appliances should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Unplug small appliances when not in use.
- Window air conditioners should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Many manufacturers of room air conditioners prohibit the use of extension cords. If manufacturer's instructions allow extension cords, follow the instructions for the proper type.
- Buy only appliances that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Check electrical cords often. Replace cracked, damaged, and loose electrical cords. Do not try to repair them.
- Avoid putting cords where they can be damaged or pinched by furniture, under rugs and carpets, or across doorways.
- Use only surge protectors or power strips that have internal overload protection and the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Extension cords are for temporary use only. Have a qualified electrician determine if additional circuits or wall outlets are needed.
- Replace wall outlets if plugs do not fit snugly or the wall outlet does not accept plugs with one blade larger than the other.
- Cover wall outlets and switches with wall plates to prevent shocks.
- If you have young children install tamper-resistant electrical outlets. Where replacement is not possible install new protective outlet covers, which do not allow a child to insert an object into the wall outlet.
- Call a qualified electrician if you have:
  - ♦ recurring problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers
  - ♦ a tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance
  - ♦ discolored or warm wall outlets or switches
  - ♦ a burning smell or rubbery odor coming from an appliance
  - ♦ flickering lights
  - ♦ sparks from a wall outlet
  - ♦ cracked or broken wall outlets
- Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) are a type of circuit breaker that shuts off electricity when a dangerous condition occurs. Have a qualified electrician install them in your home.
- Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) reduce the risk of shock. GFCIs shut off electricity when it becomes a shock hazard. Make sure GFCI's are installed in

bathrooms, basements, garages, outdoors, at kitchen counters, and other locations in the home where electricity is near water.

- Test AFCIs and GFCIs once a month by pushing the test button to make sure they are working properly.

## **Outside the home**

- Keep ladders at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.
- Never touch a power line— you could be electrocuted. Assume that all power lines are live. Stay at a safe distance.
- Never touch a person who is in contact with a downed wire.
- Report downed power lines to authorities.
- Some power lines are underground. Call your local authority to have lines identified and marked before digging. You can also call the national 8-1-1 “Call before you dig” number.

## **Outdoor burning**

- Check with your local fire department or municipality for any restrictions before starting an open air, recreational, or outdoor cooking fire. This includes campfires, brush fires, fire pits, chimeneas, and outdoor fireplaces. Obtain proper permits, if required. You may not be permitted to do outdoor burning in some municipalities and during some seasons of the year.
- Closely supervise all outdoor fires. Make sure the fire is out before leaving.
- Supervise children around any outdoor fire.
- Use chimeneas, outdoor fireplaces, and fire pits outdoors only and at least 25 feet away from the home or anything that can burn.
- Permitted open fires need to be at least 50 feet from anything that can burn.
- Avoid burning on windy, dry days. When conditions are windy or dry, it is too easy for open burning to spread out of control.
- Where outdoor burning is allowed, never use gasoline or other flammable or combustible liquids.
- Have a hose, bucket of water, or shovel and dirt and sand nearby when burning to extinguish the fire.

## **Lightning**

### **Indoor safety**

- Stay off corded phones, computers, and other electronic equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity or plumbing.
- Avoid washing your hands, showering, bathing, doing laundry, or washing dishes.
- Stay away from windows and doors.
- If the lights go out, use only battery-powered lights in homes, tents, trailers, motor homes, and boats.

## Outdoor safety

- Seek shelter immediately in a building or a hard-topped vehicle.
- If you are in or on open water, go to land and seek shelter immediately.
- If you can't get to shelter and you feel your hair stand on end, indicating that lightning is about to strike, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground. **This is a last resort when a building or hard-topped vehicle is not available.**
- If a person is struck by lightning, call 9-1-1 and get medical care immediately. Lightning strike victims carry no electrical charge; attend to them immediately. Administer CPR if needed.

## Clothes dryers

- Use the right plug and wall outlet. Make sure the machine is connected properly.
- Use rigid or flexible metal venting material to sustain proper air flow and drying time to reduce the risk of fire or fire spread.
- Make sure the air exhaust vent is not restricted and the outdoor vent flap will open when the dryer is operating.
- Have your dryer installed and serviced by a professional.
- Keep dryers in good working order. Gas dryers should be inspected by a professional to make sure that the gas line and connection are intact and free of leaks.
- Do not use the dryer without a lint filter.
- Clean the dryer's lint filter before and after each load of laundry. Remove the lint that has collected around the drum.
- Follow the manufacturer's operating instructions. Do not overload the dryer.
- Turn off the dryer when you leave home or go to bed.
- Clean lint out of the vent pipe quarterly or more often if you notice that it is taking longer than usual for your clothes to dry, or have a dryer lint removal service do it for you.

## Fire extinguishers

**NOTE:** Teaching any non-professional to use fire extinguishers is not recommended. If you do, use extreme caution.

- Firefighting should be left to the fire department.
- Only use a fire extinguisher if you have been trained. Learn and practice how to use fire extinguishers **before** a fire occurs.
- Fire extinguishers have limits. Never try to extinguish a fire that is larger than a small trash can.
- Before trying to fight a fire, make sure everyone is leaving the house, someone is calling 9-1-1, you can get out, and you are using the proper fire extinguisher.
- If the fire does not go out after using one extinguisher, **GET OUT!**

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height. A person should not have to travel far (more than 40 feet) to reach one and should never have to travel up or down stairs to reach it.
- Fire extinguishers for the home should have a rating of at least 2-A:10-B:C.
- Inspect fire extinguishers monthly and have them serviced annually.

## **Tips & Techniques**

- **Try to accommodate their busy schedule.** Try to partner with another event to reduce the time away from their busy lives.
- **Stress the importance of smoking safety and the added risk of alcohol use.**
- **Props**
  - ♦ The State Fire Marshal's Office has a Fire Safety House, a mobile unit that simulates the kitchen and bedroom of a house. Equipped with heated doors, smoke alarms, sprinkler heads, smoking appliances, and a fire escape ladder it is used to teach audiences of all ages exit drills, smoke alarm use and maintenance, the proper way to exit a burning house, and fire extinguisher use. For more information or to schedule an event with the Fire Safety House, please contact the Fire Safety Education Division at 888-900-7414.
  - ♦ The Sparky's Hazard House is a dollhouse-like tabletop prop that can be used to teach hazards in the home. It is available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.
  - ♦ 9-1-1 simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.

# Older Adults

## 9-1-1

- Use 9-1-1 only for emergencies.
  - Use a 9-1-1 simulator or unplugged phone to allow the audience to practice calling. Simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.
- In a fire emergency, always call 9-1-1 **after** you escape a burning building.

### Information to give the emergency operator

- Stay calm.
- Tell the 9-1-1 operator the address of the emergency.
- Tell the 9-1-1 operator what the emergency is.
- Answer all questions you are asked.
- Stay on the phone until the 9-1-1 operator tells you to hang up.

## Smoke alarms

### Installation

- Every home must have working smoke alarms.
  - Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a home fire in half.
- Smoke alarms should be installed in every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of the home, including the basement. Larger homes may require additional smoke alarms to provide a minimum level of protection.
- For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home; when one sounds, they all sound. Wireless battery-operated interconnected smoke alarms are now available.
- An ionization smoke alarm is generally more responsive to flaming fires; a photoelectric smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires. For the best protection or where extra time is needed to awaken or assist others both types of alarms or combination ionization and photoelectric alarms (also known as dual sensor alarms) are recommended.
- Make sure everyone in your home understands the warning of the smoke alarm and how to respond.
- Choose a smoke alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Smoke alarms should be installed away from the kitchen to prevent false alarms. Generally, they should be at least 10 feet away from a cooking appliance.

- A smoke alarm installed within 10 to 20 feet of a cooking appliance should be a photoelectric type to reduce false alarms or have a hush feature which temporarily reduces the sensitivity of the alarm.

### **Testing and maintenance**

- Test smoke alarms in accordance with manufacturer's instructions at least once a month.
- Use care to prevent falls when using step stools and ladders to test a smoke alarm.
  - ♦ To avoid climbing and reduce the risk of falls, suggest using a broom handle to test the alarm.
  - ♦ Some smoke alarms are designed to be tested with a television remote to reduce the risk of falls.
- Dust or vacuum smoke alarms annually and/or whenever the battery is changed. Follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.

### **Deaf or hard of hearing**

- Smoke alarms and alert devices, called accessories, are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Choose smoke alarms and accessories that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Research the available products, and select one that best meets your individual needs.
- Strobe lights installed throughout the home of people who are deaf are activated by smoke alarms and alert them to fire conditions. When people who are deaf are asleep, a high intensity strobe light along with a pillow or bed shaker is required to wake them up and alert them to fire conditions so they can escape. New technology equipment is activated by the sound of a standard smoke alarm.
- Accessories that produce a loud, mixed low-pitched sound are usually installed next to the bed of people who are hard of hearing. This equipment is activated by the sound of the smoke alarm. People who are hard of hearing may find that a pillow or bed shaker is also effective to wake them up.
- Recent research has shown that a loud, mixed low-pitched sound is more effective for waking people of all ages than the loud, high-pitched sound of a traditional smoke alarm. As people age, their ability to hear high-pitched sounds decreases.

### **Sleeping with bedroom door open or closed**

- Make sure everyone can hear the sound of the smoke alarms and knows what your smoke alarms sound like.
- If you sleep with bedroom doors closed, have interconnected smoke alarms.

### **Smoke alarm replacement**

- Replace all smoke alarms (including hard-wired) when they are 10 years old.
- Immediately replace any smoke alarm that does not respond properly when tested.

- Combination smoke-carbon monoxide alarms should be replaced according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

## **Battery replacement**

- Smoke alarms with sealed, long-life batteries are designed to remain effective for 10 years. If the alarm chirps, warning that the battery is low, replace the entire smoke alarm right away.
- Replace the battery in an unsealed, long-life battery smoke alarm when it chirps warning that the battery is low.
- For smoke alarms with any other type of battery, replace batteries at least once a year. If that alarm chirps, replace only the battery.

## **Rental units**

- All rental units need working smoke alarms.
- Check with your local fire or building department for state and local ordinances on smoke alarm installation and maintenance in rental units.
- If you rent and do not have working smoke alarms, contact your landlord or property manager immediately about having them installed.
- If after you have contacted your landlord or property manager smoke alarms remain uninstalled, consider installing them yourself or having someone install them for you. Some fire departments will install smoke alarms for you.
- If the smoke alarms are not working the battery or the smoke alarm itself may need to be replaced. This may be the responsibility of you or the landlord depending on your rental agreement.
- Test smoke alarms at least one a month.
- Make sure everyone in the home understands the warning of the smoke alarm and how to respond.
- Dust or vacuum smoke alarms annually and/or whenever the battery is changed. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.

## **Disposal of smoke alarms**

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offers information on the safe disposal of smoke alarms at [www.epa.gov/radiation/sources/smoke\\_dispose.htm](http://www.epa.gov/radiation/sources/smoke_dispose.htm).

## **Home fire sprinklers**

- Sprinklers protect lives and property by keeping fires small. Because the sprinkler system reacts so quickly, it can dramatically reduce the heat, flames, and smoke produced in a fire, allowing people time to escape safely.
- Sprinklers activate independently. Only the sprinkler closest to the fire will activate, spraying water directly on the fire, not the rest of the house.

- A sprinkler will control or put out a fire with a fraction of the water that would be used by fire department hoses.
- Accidental sprinkler discharges are extremely rare.
- Home fire sprinklers can be installed in new or existing homes. If you are building or remodeling your home, install a home fire sprinkler system.
- It is especially important to install a home fire sprinkler system in homes with persons who may not be able to get out without help, such as people with disabilities, young children, or older adults.

## **Installation**

- Have a qualified contractor install your home fire sprinkler system according to local codes, standards, and fire safety regulations.
- Home fire sprinklers work along with smoke alarms to save lives. NPFA data shows that home fire sprinklers cut the risk of dying in a home fire by 80%.

## **Maintenance**

- The home fire sprinkler installer must provide instructions on inspecting, testing, and maintaining the system. It is a simple process that can be performed by the home occupant. A simple visual inspection should be done monthly to ensure the water valve on the sprinkler is open.
- Periodic visual inspection of all sprinklers should be done monthly to make sure nothing is blocking them and nothing is hung on or attached to them.
- Do a water flow test on the sprinkler system every six months or have a fire sprinkler contractor do the test to ensure all water flow devices are working.
- Keep sprinklers clear and free of objects that can interfere with their proper use.
- Inspect tanks, if present, monthly to make sure they are full.
- Where a pump is used, start it every month to make sure that it works and that it does not trip any circuit breakers.
- Whenever painting, make sure sprinklers are not painted by covering them with a bag, which should be removed immediately after the work is done.

## **Carbon monoxide**

### **Dangers of carbon monoxide**

- Carbon monoxide (CO), often called the “silent killer”, is a gas you cannot see, taste, or smell. It is created when fuels (such as kerosene, gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, methane, etc) do not burn properly. Exposure to undetected high levels of carbon monoxide can be fatal.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning can result from faulty furnaces or other heating appliances, portable generators, water heaters, clothes dryers, or cars left running in garages.
- Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning may include headache, nausea, and drowsiness.

- Exposure to undetected high levels of carbon monoxide can be fatal, causing death within minutes.

## **Installation**

- Choose a CO alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each separate sleeping area, on every level of the home, and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes, or standards. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Combination smoke/CO alarms must be installed in accordance with the requirements for smoke alarms.
- CO alarms are not substitutes for smoke alarms and vice versa. Know the difference between the sound of smoke alarms and the sound of CO alarms.

## **Testing and replacement**

- Test CO alarms at least once a month and replace CO alarms if they fail to respond correctly when tested. Replace the CO alarm according to the manufacturer's instructions or when the end-of-life signal sounds.
- Know the difference between the sound of the CO alarm and the smoke alarm, and their low-battery signals. If the audible low-battery signal sounds, replace the batteries or replace the device. If it still sounds, get to a fresh air location. Call 9-1-1 from a neighbor's house or cell phone.
- To keep CO alarms working well, follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.

## **Carbon monoxide precautions**

### **Inside the home**

- Have fuel-burning heating equipment (fireplaces, furnaces, water heaters, wood and coal stoves, space or portable heaters) and chimneys inspected by a professional every year.
- Open the damper for proper ventilation before using the fireplace.
- Never use your oven or stovetop to heat your home. The CO might kill people and pets.
- When purchasing new heating and cooking equipment, select products tested and labeled by a recognized testing laboratory.
- Make sure all fuel-burning vented equipment is vented to the outside to avoid CO poisoning. Keep the venting for exhaust clear and unblocked.

### **Outside the home**

- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Never run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if

garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not blocked with snow, ice, or other materials. The CO might kill people and pets.

- Make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow and other debris.
- Only use barbecue grills, which can produce carbon monoxide, outside away from all doors, windows, vents, and other building openings. Never use them in the home, garage, or near building openings.
- Use only battery-powered lights in homes, tents, trailers, motor homes, and motor boats.

### **Portable generators**

- Use portable generators outdoors in well-ventilated areas away from all doors, windows, vents, and other building openings to prevent exhaust fumes from entering the home.
- When using portable generators, install CO alarms according to the manufacturer's installation instructions.

### **If your CO alarm sounds**

- Immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for.
- Call 9-1-1 from a fresh air location (outdoors or by an open window). Remain at a fresh air location until emergency personnel arrives to assist you.

## **Home fire escape**

### **Plan**

- Make a home escape plan. Draw a map of each level of the home. Show all doors and windows. Discuss the plan with everyone in your household, including visitors.
- Children, older adults, and people with disabilities may need assistance to wake up and get out. Ensure that someone will help them. Have a plan for everyone in your home who has a disability.
- Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible. Make sure all doors and windows that lead outside open easily.
- If you have a window air conditioner, make sure there is still a second way out of the room.
- Windows with security bars, grilles, and window guards should have emergency release devices.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows how to call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or from a neighbor's phone.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows the sound and understands the warning of the smoke alarms and how to respond.

- Have an outside meeting place (something permanent, like a tree, light pole, or mailbox) a safe distance in front of the home.
- Make sure your house number can be seen day or night from the street.
- If you have escape ladders for escaping from the second and third floors, make sure they are listed by a recognized testing laboratory. Make sure the escape ladder fits the window. Use only if all other exits are blocked. To prevent injury from a fall, use the ladder only in a real emergency.
- Teach children how to escape on their own in case you cannot help them.

## **Practice**

- Practice the plan with everyone in your home twice a year and at least once at night with the lights off.
- Practice the plan with overnight guests.
- Push the smoke alarm button to start the drill.
- Practice what to do in case there is smoke.
- Get low and go.
- Get out fast.
- Practice using different ways out.
- Close doors behind you as you leave.
- Go to your outside meeting place.
- Practice opening your home escape ladder and dropping it out the window, but not using it.
- After you practice, evaluate your home fire drill and discuss what worked and what could be improved. Improve it and practice again.

## **If there is a fire**

- When the smoke alarm sounds, get out fast. You may have only seconds to escape safely.
- If there is smoke blocking your door or first way out, use your second way out.
- Smoke is toxic. If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your way out.
- Before opening a door, feel the door and doorknob. If either is hot, leave the door closed and use your second way out.
- If you open a door, open it slowly. Be ready to shut it quickly if heavy smoke or fire is present.
- Close doors behind you as you leave.
- Get out and stay out. Never go back inside for any reason.
- If you can't get to someone needing assistance, leave the home and call 9-1-1. Tell the emergency operator where the person is located.
- If pets are trapped inside your home, tell firefighters right away.
- If you can't get out, close the door, and cover vents and cracks around doors with cloth or tape to keep smoke out. Call 9-1-1. Stay where you are and signal for help at the window with a light-colored cloth or flashlight.

- Go to your outside meeting place.
- Call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or neighbor's house.

## Hotels/Motels

- Choose a hotel that is protected by both smoke alarms and fire sprinklers.
- When you check in, ask the desk clerk what the fire alarm sounds like. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, ask for a room equipped with a smoke alarm and accessories that will awaken you, or a portable smoke alarm made specifically for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to place in your room. You may want to consider taking one with you.
- Count the number of doors between your room and the nearest two fire exits. Open the exit doors to be sure they're unlocked.
- Keep your room key by your bed and take it with you if there is a fire. If you cannot escape, you may have to return to your room.
- If you hear an alarm, leave immediately, closing all doors behind you.
- Use the stairs – never use elevators during a fire.
- If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your exit.
- If all escape routes are blocked, return to your room. Shut off fans and air conditioners. Stuff wet towels or bedding in the crack around the doors and vents. Call 9-1-1 to let them know your location. Wait at a window and signal for help with a flashlight or light-colored cloth.
- Take a flashlight; keep it near your bed.

## If you are on fire

**NOTE:** Due to the risk of injury, never ask senior adults to practice stop, drop, and roll.

- If your clothes catch fire, stop immediately.
- Drop to the ground.
- Cover your face with your hands.
- Roll over and over or back and forth to put out the fire.
- If you cannot stop, drop, and roll, keep a blanket or towel nearby to help you or others smother flames. Cover the person with a blanket to smother the fire. If you use a wheelchair, scooter, or other device and are able to get to the floor, lock the device first to stay in place before getting on the floor to roll until the flames are out.
- Cool a burn right away by putting it in cool water for three to five minutes.
  - ♦ Cover the burn with a clean, dry cloth.
  - ♦ Do not apply creams, ointments, sprays, or other home remedies.
  - ♦ Get medical help right away by calling 9-1-1.

# Burns

## Prevent scalds and burns in the kitchen

- Have a three foot kid and pet free zone around the stove.
- Teach children that hot things burn.
- Place hot objects so they cannot be pulled down or knocked over.
- Turn pot handles away from the stove's edge.
- Keep appliance cords coiled and away from counter edges.
- Keep hot foods and liquids away from table and counter edges.
- Use dry oven mitts or potholders. Hot cookware or tableware can heat moisture in a hot pad resulting in a scald burn.
- If you have young children in the home, cook on the stove's back burners.
- When children are old enough, teach them to cook safely.

## Hot tap water and scald burns

- Set your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- When bathing or taking a shower, the temperature of the water should not exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Consider installing "anti-scald" devices on tub faucets and shower heads to prevent scalds.
- If you do not install "anti-scald" devices on tub faucets and shower heads, adjust the thermostat setting on your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. The lower temperature lowers the risk of scalds and burns.
- If you lower the temperature setting on your water heater, you will need to test the temperature at the faucet. Allow water to run three to five minutes. Test the water with a meat, candy, or cooking thermometer. If the water is hotter than 120 degrees Fahrenheit, adjust the temperature of the water heater and wait a full day to allow the temperature in the tank to adjust. Retest and adjust as needed.
- If children are in the home, don't leave the bathroom while the tub is filling.
- Before placing a child in the bath or getting into the tub yourself, test the water.
- Fill the tub or sink by running cool water first and then adding hot water. Turn hot water off first. Mix the water thoroughly and check the temperature by moving your hand, wrist, and forearm through the water. The water should feel warm to the touch.
- When bathing a young child, seat the child facing away from the faucets so the child cannot reach the faucet. Turn the faucet to the "COLD" position.
- Never leave a child unattended in a tub of water.

## Treatment of burns

- Cool a burn right away by putting it in cool water for three to five minutes.
- Cover with a clean, dry cloth. Do not apply creams, ointments, sprays, or other home remedies.

- Remove all clothing, diapers, jewelry, and metal from the burned area. These can hide underlying burns and retain heat, thereby increasing skin damage.
- Call 9-1-1 or see your doctor if the burn is:
  - ♦ on the face, hands, feet, major joints, or genital area and /or bigger than the injured person's palm
  - ♦ white, tight, dry (leathery), or painless
  - ♦ caused by chemicals or electricity
  - ♦ causing difficulty breathing
- See a doctor as soon as possible if the burn:
  - ♦ does not heal in 2 to 3 days
  - ♦ becomes foul smelling
  - ♦ develops thick drainage, redness, or swelling
  - ♦ causes fever

## Matches and lighters

- Keep matches and lighters up high, out of the reach of children, in a locked cabinet.
- Purchase and use only child-resistant lighters.
- Teach young children to tell a grown-up if they find matches or lighters, and never to touch them.
- Lighters that look like toys can confuse children. Do not buy or use them.
  - ♦ Beginning July 1, 2010, sale of toy-like lighters is banned in Mississippi.

## Smoking

- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- If you smoke, use only fire-safe cigarettes.
- To prevent a deadly cigarette fire, you must be alert. You are not alert if you are sleepy, have taken medicine or drugs that make you drowsy, or consumed alcohol.
- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- Wherever you smoke, use deep, sturdy ashtrays. If ashtrays are not available, use a metal can or pail. Never empty smoking materials directly into a trash can. Place away from anything that can burn.
- Before you throw out butts and ashes, make sure they are out by putting them in water or sand.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Never smoke where medical oxygen is used. Medical oxygen can cause materials to ignite more easily and make fire burn at a faster rate than normal. It can make an existing fire burn faster and hotter.
- Before going to bed, check under furniture cushions and in other places people smoke for cigarette butts that may have fallen out of sight.
- Do not extinguish or throw cigarettes in vegetation, potted plants, landscaping, peat moss, dried grasses, mulch, leaves, and other similar items; they can easily catch fire.
- Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, and other smoking materials up high out of the reach of children, in a locked cabinet.

## Candles

- Consider using battery-operated flameless candles.
- When using candles, place them in sturdy, safe candleholders that will not burn.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.
- Never use a candle when medical oxygen is being used.
- Protect candle flames with glass chimneys or containers.
- Avoid using candles in bedrooms and sleeping areas.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Extinguish candles when you leave a room.
- Be careful not to splatter wax when extinguishing a candle. Using a candle snuffer is safer than blowing the candle out.
- Always use a flashlight, not a candle, for emergency lighting.
- Use only battery-powered lights in tents, trailers, motor homes, and boats.

## Cooking

### **Choose safe cooking equipment.**

- Always use cooking equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions and code requirements when installing, cleaning, and operating cooking equipment.
- Plug microwave ovens or other cooking appliances directly into a wall outlet. Never use an extension cord for a cooking appliance as it can overload the circuit and cause a fire.
- Check electrical cords for cracks, breaks, damage, or overheating. Have a professional repair the appliance or cord as needed or replace the appliance.

### **Stay alert**

- To prevent cooking fires, you must be alert. You are not alert if you are sleepy, have taken medicine or drugs that make you drowsy, or have consumed alcohol.

### **Watch what you heat**

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.

### **Keep things that can catch fire away from heat sources**

- Keep things that can catch on fire (oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels, or curtains) away from your stovetop.

- Don't store things that can catch on fire in an oven or toaster oven.
- Keep the stovetop, burners, and oven clean.
- Wear short, close-fitting, or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire if it comes in contact with a gas flame or an electric burner.

### **Keep kids and pets away from the cooking area**

- Have a “kid-free zone” of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.
- Never hold a child while you are cooking, drinking a hot liquid, or carrying hot foods or liquids.
- Keep pets off cooking surfaces and nearby countertops to prevent them from knocking things onto the burner.

### **What to do if you have a cooking fire**

- When in doubt, just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire. After you leave, call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or a neighbor's telephone.
- If you are trained and decide to fight the fire, be sure others are already getting out and you have a clear path to the exit. It is best to leave the firefighting to the professionals.
- Always keep a lid that fits the pan or cookie sheet and an oven mitt nearby when you cook.
- If a small fire starts in a pan, smother the fire by carefully sliding the lid or cookie sheet over the pan while wearing your oven mitt. Turn off the burner. Do not move the pan. To keep the fire from restarting, keep the lid on until the pan is completely cool.
- Never pour water on a grease fire.
- Never discharge a fire extinguisher directly into a pan fire because it can spread the fire.
- In case of an oven or microwave fire, turn off the oven or microwave oven and keep door closed until it is cool. Unplug the appliance, if you can safely reach the wall outlet. After the fire, have the equipment checked and/or serviced before you use it again.

### **Microwave ovens**

- Place or install the microwave oven at a safe height within easy reach of all users. If possible, the face of the person using the microwave oven should be higher than the front of the microwave door to reduce the risk of a scald.
- Always supervise children when they are using the microwave oven.
- Use only microwave-safe cookware (containers or dishes). Never use aluminum foil or metal objects in a microwave oven.

- Open food cooked in the microwave slowly, away from the face. Hot steam escaping from a container of food cooked in the microwave or the food itself can cause burns.
- Never heat a baby bottle in a microwave oven because it heats liquids unevenly. Heat baby bottles in warm water from the faucet.
- If your microwave is mounted over your stove, use extra caution.

## **Barbecue grills**

- Propane, charcoal, and wood pellet barbecue grills must be used only outdoors. Indoor use can kill occupants by either causing a fire or CO poisoning.
- Place the grill well away from siding and deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches. Do not store or use a grill on a porch or balcony, including any porch or balcony on an upper level of a building.
- Place the grill a safe distance from lawn games, play areas, and foot traffic.
- Have a three-foot kid and pet free zone around the grill.
- Use long-handled grilling tools to give the chef plenty of clearance from heat and flames.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in trays below the grill so it cannot be ignited by a hot grill.

## **Charcoal grills**

- Use one of the following methods to start charcoal for cooking:
  - If you use a “charcoal chimney” to start charcoal for cooking, use a long match to avoid burning your fingers when lighting the paper.
  - If you use an electrical charcoal starter be sure that you use a grounded extension cord.
  - If you choose to use lighter fluid, use only fluid intended for charcoal grills.
- Never add charcoal starter fluid when coals or kindling have already been ignited.
- Never use gasoline or any other flammable liquid to get the fire going.
- Have a three-foot kid and pet free zone around the grill.
- Store the charcoal starter fluid out of reach of children and away from heat sources.
- Dispose of charcoal coals only after they are cool. Empty the coals into a metal container with a tight-fitting lid that is only used to collect coals. Never empty coals directly into a trash can. Place away from anything that can burn.

## **Propane grills**

- Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year each time the tank is reconnected. A soap and water solution (1/3 liquid dish soap and 2/3 water) applied to the hose and connection will quickly reveal escaping propane by causing bubbles to form. If you determine there is a gas leak, do the following:

- ♦ Turn off the gas tank and grill.
- ♦ If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.
- ♦ If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.
- Use only equipment with the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to set up the grill and maintain it.
- Always store propane gas tanks outside of buildings or garages. Vapors leaked indoors can be easily ignited by pilot lights or electric equipment, causing an explosion. If you store a gas grill inside during the winter, disconnect the cylinder and leave it outside.
- Only light a propane grill with the cover open.

## **Turkey fryers**

**NOTE:** Gas-fueled turkey fryers that immerse the turkey in hot oil are very dangerous. These turkey fryers use a substantial quantity of cooking oil at high temperatures, and units currently available for home use pose a significant danger that hot oil will be released at some point during the cooking process. The use of turkey fryers by consumers can lead to devastating burns or other injuries and the destruction of property.

- If you chose to use a turkey fryer, read and follow all manufacturer's instructions and safety warnings carefully.

## **Heating**

### **General heating**

- Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Supervise children whenever a wood or oil stove or other space heater is being used. Use a sturdy metal screen to prevent contact burns, which are more common than flame burns.
- All heaters need space. Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Use heating equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Never use your oven or stove for heating. Ovens and stoves are not designed to heat your home.
- Install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters, or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- Have a qualified professional install the equipment.
- Make sure all fuel-burning vented equipment is vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Carbon monoxide is created when fuels burn incompletely. Carbon monoxide poisoning can cause illness and even death. Make sure the venting for exhaust is kept clear and unobstructed. This includes removal of snow, ice, and other debris around the outlet to the outside.

- Install and maintain CO alarms that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory inside your home to provide early warning of carbon monoxide.
- Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected annually by a qualified professional.

### **Portable electric space heaters**

- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn in every direction.
- Turn heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.
- Only purchase and use portable space heaters that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory with an automatic shut-off so if they are tipped over they will shut off.
- Place portable space heaters on a solid, flat surface and keep them and their electrical cord away from things that can burn, high traffic areas, and doorways.
- Plug space heaters directly into wall outlets and never into an extension cord or power strip.
- Do not plug anything else into the same wall outlet as the one you are using for your space heater. Doing so could result in overheating.
- Check often for a secure plug/outlet fit. If the plug does not fit snugly into the wall outlet or if the plug becomes very hot, the wall outlet may need to be replaced. Have a qualified electrician replace the wall outlet.
- Inspect for cracked, frayed, or damaged cords; broken plugs; or loose connections. Replace before using the space heater.

### **Fuel burning space heaters**

- Always use the proper fuel as specified by the manufacturer.
- When refueling, allow the appliance to cool first and then refuel outside.
- When using the space heater, open a window to ensure proper ventilation.
- In portable kerosene or other liquid-fueled space heaters, always use the proper grade of the proper fuel for the heater.
- All new unvented gas-fired space heaters have an oxygen depletion sensor that detects a reduced level of oxygen in the area where the heater is operating and shuts off the heater before a hazardous level of carbon monoxide accumulates. If you have an older heater without this feature, replace it with one that does.
- If the pilot light of your gas heater goes out, allow 5 minutes or more for the gas to go away before trying again, do not allow gas to accumulate, and light the match before you turn on the gas to the pilot to avoid risk of flashback.
- If you smell gas in your gas heater, do not attempt to light the appliance. Leave the building immediately and call 9-1-1 or the gas company from outside.

### **Wood burning stoves**

- Have a qualified professional install stoves, chimney connectors, and chimneys following manufacturer's instructions.

- Wood stoves should bear the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- In wood stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood pellets.
- Start the fire with newspaper, kindling, or fire starters. Never use flammable liquids, such as lighter fluid, kerosene, gasoline, or diesel to start a fire. They produce invisible vapors that can easily catch fire.
- Keep the doors of your wood stove closed unless loading or stoking the fire.
- Allow ashes to cool before disposing. Place ashes in a tightly covered metal container and keep the ash container at least 10 feet away from the home and any other nearby buildings. Never empty the ash directly into a trash can. Douse and saturate the ashes with water.
- Chimneys and vents need to be cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional at least once a year.

## **Fireplaces**

- Always use a metal or heat-tempered glass screen on a fireplace and keep it in place.
- Burn only dry, seasoned wood. Not only is it cleaner for the environment, it also creates less buildup in the chimney.
- Use artificial logs according to manufacturer's recommendations. Never burn more than one log at a time.
- Use only newspaper, kindling wood, or fire starters to start a fire. Never use flammable liquids, such as lighter fluid, kerosene, gasoline, or diesel to start a fire. They produce invisible vapors that can easily catch fire.
- Chimneys and vents need to be cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional at least once a year.
- Keep children and pets away from the outside vents.
- Use chimineas, outdoor fireplaces, and fire pits outdoors only and at least 10 feet away from the home or anything that can burn.

## **Central heating**

- Furnaces need to be cleaned and serviced at least once a year by a qualified professional.
- Keep things that can burn at least 3 feet away from the furnace. Keep the furnace area clean and uncluttered.
- If you smell gas, do not light the appliance. Leave the building immediately and call 9-1-1 or the gas company from outside.

## **Fire pots, personal fireplaces, and patio torches**

- Fire pots, personal fireplaces, and patio torches are considered open flames and use gel fuel. Gel fuel is highly flammable. Use extreme caution when using or adding fuel.
- Never leave a lit fire pot, personal fireplace, or torch unattended.

- Keep these devices at least one foot away from anything that can burn.
- Place the fire pot or personal fireplace on a sturdy surface.
- Make sure patio torches are secure and not in the path of people or pets.
- Have a “kid-free zone” of at least three feet away from fire pots, personal fireplaces, and torches.
- Be careful reaching over the devices; clothing or hair could catch fire.
- Use only gel fuel to refuel.
- Citronella fuel is intended for outdoor use only
- Allow the device to cool for 30 to 45 minutes before refueling. Pouring gel fuel in a device that is not completely cool may result in a fire or injury.
- If gel fuel is spilled on clothing, remove the clothing and launder immediately.
- Store the gel fuel in its tightly sealed container away from heat sources and out of reach of children and pets.
- Stop, drop, and roll may not put out clothing that catches fire from gel fuel. A dry chemical fire extinguisher (if you have been trained to use it) can be used to extinguish the fire.

## **Medical oxygen**

- When medical oxygen or an oxygen tank is in use, the amount of oxygen in the air, furniture, clothing, hair, and bedding goes up, making it easier for a fire to start and spread. This means that there is a higher risk of both fires and burns.
- A patient on oxygen should not smoke
- Never smoke in a home where medical oxygen is used. Medical oxygen can cause material to ignite more easily and make fires burn at a faster rate than normal. It can make an existing fire burn faster and hotter.
- Post “No Smoking” and “No Open Flames” signs in and outside of the home to remind residents and guests not to smoke.
- Keep oxygen cylinders at least five feet from a heat source, open flames, or electrical devices.
- Never use a candle, match, lighter, or other open flame; a fireplace, stove, or other device fueled by gas, kerosene, wood, or coal; a sparking toy; or smoke in a home where medical oxygen is used.
- Keep oil and grease away from where oxygen is in use. Body oil, hand lotion, and items containing oil and grease can easily ignite.
- Never use aerosol sprays containing combustible materials near oxygen.

## **Electrical**

- Electrical work should be done only by a qualified electrician. Some communities require that a person doing electrical work have a license. Find out about the laws in your area.

## Inside the home

- Have your home electrical system inspected when buying, selling, or renovating a home.
- Keep lamps, light fixtures, and light bulbs away from anything that can burn, including furniture, bedding, curtains, clothing, and flammable or combustible gases and liquids.
- Use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or fixture.
- If a fuse blows or a circuit breaker trips often, have a qualified electrician inspect and correct it before turning the breaker back on or replacing the fuse.
- Always replace blown fuses with ones of the proper rating. If the problem continues, call an electrician.
- Major appliances (refrigerators, stoves, washers, dryers, etc.) should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Never use an extension cord; it can be easily overloaded.
- Small appliances should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Unplug small appliances when not in use.
- Window air conditioners should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Many manufacturers of room air conditioners prohibit the use of extension cords. If manufacturer's instructions allow extension cords, follow the instructions for the proper type.
- Buy only appliances that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Check electrical cords often. Replace cracked, damaged, and loose electrical cords. Do not try to repair them.
- Avoid putting cords where they can be damaged or pinched by furniture, under rugs and carpets, or across doorways.
- Use only surge protectors or power strips that have internal overload protection and the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Extension cords are for temporary use only. Have a qualified electrician determine if additional circuits or wall outlets are needed.
- Replace wall outlets if plugs do not fit snugly or the wall outlet does not accept plugs with one blade larger than the other.
- Cover wall outlets and switches with wall plates to prevent shocks.
- If you have young children install tamper-resistant electrical outlets. Where replacement is not possible install new protective outlet covers, which do not allow a child to insert an object into the outlet.
- Call a qualified electrician if you have:
  - ♦ recurring problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers
  - ♦ a tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance
  - ♦ discolored or warm wall outlets or switches
  - ♦ a burning smell or rubbery odor coming from an appliance
  - ♦ flickering lights
  - ♦ sparks from a wall outlet
  - ♦ cracked or broken wall outlets

- Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) are a type of circuit breaker that shuts off electricity when a dangerous condition occurs. Have a qualified electrician install them in your home.
- Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) reduce the risk of shock. GFCIs shut off electricity when it becomes a shock hazard. Make sure GFCI's are installed in bathrooms, basements, garages, outdoors, at kitchen counters and other locations in the home where electricity is near water.
- Test AFCIs and GFCIs once a month by pushing the test button to make sure they are working properly.

## **Outside the home**

- Keep ladders at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.
- Never touch a power line— you could be electrocuted. Assume that all power lines are live. Stay at a safe distance.
- Never touch a person who is in contact with a downed wire.
- Report downed power lines to authorities.
- Some power lines are underground. Call your local authority to have lines identified and marked before digging. You can also call the national 8-1-1 “Call before you dig” number.

## **Outdoor burning**

- Check with your local fire department or municipality for any restrictions before starting an open air, recreational, or outdoor cooking fire. This includes campfires, brush fires, fire pits, chimeneas, and outdoor fireplaces. Obtain proper permits, if required. You may not be permitted to do outdoor burning in some municipalities and during some seasons of the year.
- Closely supervise all outdoor fires. Make sure the fire is out before leaving.
- Supervise children around any outdoor fire.
- Use chimeneas, outdoor fireplaces, and fire pits outdoors only and at least 25 feet away from the home or anything that can burn.
- Permitted open fires need to be at least 50 feet from anything that can burn.
- Avoid burning on windy, dry days. When conditions are windy or dry, it is too easy for open burning to spread out of control.
- Where outdoor burning is allowed, never use gasoline or other flammable or combustible liquids.
- Have a hose, bucket of water, or shovel and dirt or sand nearby when burning to extinguish the fire.

# Lightning

## Indoor safety

- Stay off corded phones, computers, and other electronic equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity or plumbing.
- Avoid washing your hands, showering, bathing, doing laundry, or washing dishes.
- Stay away from windows and doors.
- If the lights go out, use only battery-powered lights in homes, tents, trailers, motor homes, and boats.

## Outdoor safety

- Seek shelter immediately in a building or a hard-topped vehicle.
- If you are in or on open water, go to land and seek shelter immediately.
- If you can't get to shelter and you feel your hair stand on end, indicating that lightning is about to strike, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground. **This is a last resort when a building or hard-topped vehicle is not available.**
- If a person is struck by lightning, call 9-1-1 and get medical care immediately. Lightning strike victims carry no electrical charge; attend to them immediately. Administer CPR if needed.

## Clothes dryers

- Use the right plug and wall outlet. Make sure the machine is connected properly.
- Use rigid or flexible metal venting material to sustain proper air flow and drying time to reduce the risk of fire or fire spread.
- Make sure the air exhaust vent is not restricted and the outdoor vent flap will open when the dryer is operating.
- Have your dryer installed and serviced by a professional.
- Keep dryers in good working order. Gas dryers should be inspected by a professional to make sure that the gas line and connection are intact and free of leaks.
- Do not use the dryer without a lint filter.
- Clean the dryer's lint filter before and after each load of laundry. Remove the lint that has collected around the drum.
- Follow the manufacturer's operating instructions. Do not overload the dryer.
- Turn off the dryer when you leave home or go to bed.
- Clean lint out of the vent pipe quarterly or more often if you notice that it is taking longer than usual for your clothes to dry, or have a dryer lint removal service do it for you.

## Fire extinguishers

**NOTE:** Teaching senior adults or any other non-professional to use fire extinguishers is not recommended. If you do, use extreme caution.

- Firefighting should be left to the fire department.
- Only use a fire extinguisher if you have been trained. Learn and practice how to use fire extinguishers **before** a fire occurs.
- Fire extinguishers have limits. Never try to extinguish a fire that is larger than a small trash can.
- Before trying to fight a fire, make sure everyone is leaving the house, someone is calling 9-1-1, you can get out, and you are using the proper fire extinguisher.
- If the fire does not go out after using one extinguisher, **GET OUT!**
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height. A person should not have to travel far (more than 40 feet) to reach one and should never have to travel up or down stairs to reach it.
- Fire extinguishers for the home should have a rating of at least 2-A:10-B:C.
- Inspect fire extinguishers monthly and have them serviced annually.

### Tips & Techniques

- **Try to schedule presentations early in the day rather than in the evening.**
- **Remember these adults sometimes may be hard of hearing.** Use a loud clear voice, but avoid yelling.
- **Senior adults have a shorter attention span.** Consult the leader of the group for suggested presentation length.
- **Pay attention to your audience.** If you notice your audience nodding off, you may need to cut your presentation short. You can usually schedule a return visit to cover additional information.
- **Props**
  - The State Fire Marshal's Office has a Fire Safety House, a mobile unit that simulates the kitchen and bedroom of a house. Equipped with heated doors, smoke alarms, sprinkler heads, smoking appliances, and a fire escape ladder it is used to teach audiences of all ages exit drills, smoke alarm use and maintenance, the proper way to exit a burning house, and fire extinguisher use. For more information or to schedule an event with the Fire Safety House, please contact the Fire Safety Education Division at 888-900-7414.
  - The Sparky's Hazard House is a dollhouse-like tabletop prop that can be used to teach hazards in the home. It is available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.
  - 9-1-1 simulators are available for loan to members of the Mississippi Association of Public Fire Safety Educators. To join, see the application at the beginning of this guide.