

Fire Hazards in the Home

Fire Facts

- On average, there are four destructive home fires every day in Alberta.
- Home fires are responsible for the majority, 65 per cent, of fire deaths in Alberta.
- Home fires are responsible for the majority, 58 per cent, of fire injuries in Alberta.

Safety Tips

- Most home fires in Alberta happen in the kitchen. Unattended cooking is a major reason. Never leave cooking food unattended. When deep-frying, use a temperature-controlled skillet or deep-fat fryer.
- Keep cooking areas clean and clear of materials that could catch fire, such as potholders, towels, shopping bags, rags, drapes and food packaging. Create a “kid-free zone” around the stove, keeping children and pets at least one metre (three feet) away from the cooking area.
- Give space heaters plenty of space. Space heaters should be at least one metre (three feet) away from anything that could burn. Always make sure to turn heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Once a year, arrange for a professional inspection and service of central furnaces, water heaters, fireplaces and wood stoves, including chimneys and chimney connectors.
- Lit candles should not be left unattended or allowed to burn to the bottom. They should be extinguished when before leaving the room or going to sleep. Use candleholders that won't tip over easily. Candleholders should be made of non-combustible materials and should be big enough to catch dripping wax safely.
- If there are smokers in your home, make sure ashtrays are large and deep so that they won't tip over. Douse cigarette and cigar butts with water before discarding them. Never dispose cigarette butts carelessly in the backyard or in flower pots. Dry vegetation or peat moss can ignite.
- Keep matches and lighters up high and out of children's sight and reach—preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Replace or repair any electrical device that has a loose, frayed, or broken cord. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for plugging in appliances. As an added precaution, avoid plugging more than one high-wattage appliance into a single plug-in.
- In homes with small children, plug-ins should have plastic safety covers.
- To reduce the risk of electrical shock, install ground-fault circuit-interrupters (GFCIs).
- Unwanted electrical arcing, often occurring in damaged wires or cords, can generate high temperatures and cause fire. Arc-fault circuit-interrupters (AFCIs) protect against fire by continuously monitoring the electrical current in a circuit and shutting off a circuit when an

Fire Hazards in the Home

unwanted arcing fault is detected. (The National Electrical Code requires AFCIs in bedrooms when new residences are built).

- Liquids and gases like kerosene, gasoline, and propane are highly flammable. Store them in approved containers, outside the home in a properly ventilated shed or garage. Never bring even a small amount of gasoline indoors. The vapours are highly flammable and can be ignited by a tiny spark.
- Prevent fire happening in your clothes dryer by cleaning the lint trap before each load. Be sure to clean the exhaust duct from the dryer at least once every six months as lint may accumulate and become a fire hazard.