

Uncle Sam
Wants You



To Be Safe!



The Safety Corner

From the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned

April 4, 2008



This Issue of the Safety Corner Highlights Fire Safety.

From the Director: Many of us think of our homes as places of safety and security, where we can relax and forget about the problems of the world and the stresses of our careers. When it comes to the incidence of fire, however, this isn't quite true. The most deadly fires are the ones that occur in our homes. Fire kills more Americans than all natural disasters combined. Every year more than 5,000 people die in fires, over 25,000 are injured, and direct property loss is estimated at over \$9 billion. Fortunately, most fire can be prevented through education and awareness initiatives.

In order to practice fire safety in our homes, we have to stay alert for situations that might cause a fire; the most important part of fire safety is prevention. More than half of all fatal home fires occur while people are asleep. That's why smoke detectors are so essential; they warn you before you see or smell smoke and give you time to get your family and yourself to safety.

The tips outlined in this newsletter can help you keep your home and family safe from fire. You are welcome to pass on and post this newsletter for widest dissemination. Log on the www.mccll.usmc.mil website to download previous editions of the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned Safety Corner as well as our Monthly Newsletters. I look forward to your comments so we can raise awareness, reduce risk and maintain a high level of readiness.

Semper Fidelis,

Col Monte Dunard, Director MCCLL

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The challenge for Navy and Marine Corps commands is to reduce mishaps by 75% by the end of FY08

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APRIL 2008

Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned
Safety Corner

- ◆ On average in the United States in 2006, someone died in a fire about every 162 minutes, and someone was injured every 32 minutes.
- ◆ Four out of five U.S. fire deaths in 2006 occurred in homes.
- ◆ In 2006, fire departments responded to 412,500 home fires in the United States, which claimed the lives of 2,620 people (not including firefighters) and injured another 12,925 (not including firefighters).
- ◆ Most victims of fires die from smoke inhalation and not from burns.
- ◆ Fires started by lighted tobacco products, principally cigarettes, constitute the leading cause of residential fire deaths.
- ◆ Cooking equipment, most often a range or stovetop, is the leading cause of reported home fires and home fire injuries in the United States.



Costs

- ◆ In 2006, residential fires caused nearly \$7 billion in property damage.
- ◆ Fire and burn injuries represent 1% of the incidence of injuries and 2% of the total costs of injuries, or \$7.5 billion each year.
- ◆ Males account for \$4.8 billion (64%) of the total costs of fire/burn injuries.
- ◆ Females account for \$2.7 billion (36%) of the total costs of fire/burn injuries.
- ◆ Fatal fire and burn injuries cost \$3 billion, representing 2% of the total costs of all fatal injuries.
- ◆ Hospitalized fire and burn injuries total \$1 billion, or 1% of the total costs of all hospitalized injuries.
- ◆ Non-hospitalized fire and burn injuries cost \$3 billion, or 2% of the total costs of all non-hospitalized injuries.



Source: National Fire Protection Association Fire Loss in the U.S.

Residential Structures	Year	Fires	Deaths	Injuries	Direct Dollar Loss In Millions
	1997	406,500	3,390	17,775	\$4,585
	1998	381,500	3,250	17,175	\$4,391
	1999	383,000	2,920	16,425	\$5,092
	2000	379,500	3,140	15,575	\$5,674
	2001	396,500	3,140	15,575	\$5,643
	2002	401,000	2,659	14,050	\$6,055
	2003	402,000	3,165	14,075	\$6,074
	2004	410,500	3,225	14,175	\$5,948
	2005	396,000	3,055	13,825	\$6,875
	2006	412,500	2,620	12,925	\$6,990

10 Safety Tips

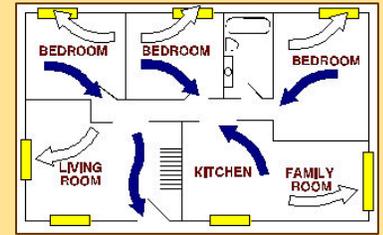
1. Install and Maintain Smoke Detectors



Smoke detectors warn you of fire in time to let you escape. Install them on each level of your home and outside of each sleeping area. Follow the manufacturer's directions, and test once a week. Replace batteries twice a year, or when the detector chirps to signal that the battery is dead. Don't ever take the battery out for other uses!

2. Plan and Practice Your Escape

If fire breaks out in your home, you must get out fast. With your family, plan two ways out of



every room. Fire escape routes must not include elevators, which might take you right to the fire! Choose a meeting place outside where everyone should gather. Once you are out, stay out! Have the whole family practice the escape plan at least twice a year.

3. Space Heaters Need Space

Keep portable space heaters at least 3 feet (1 meter) from paper, curtains, furniture, clothing, bedding, or anything else that can burn. Never leave heaters on when you leave home or go to bed, and keep children and pets well away from them.



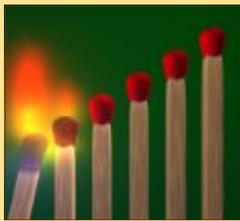
4. Be Careful Cooking



Keep cooking areas clear of combustibles, and don't leave cooking unattended. Keep your pot's handles turned inward so children won't knock or pull them over the edge of the stove. If grease catches fire, carefully slide a lid over the pan to smother the flames, then turn off the burner.

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5. A Match is a Tool for Adults



In the hands of a child, matches or lighters are extremely dangerous. Store them up high where kids can't reach them, preferably in a locked cabinet. Teach your children from the start that matches and lighters are tools for adults, not toys for kids. If children find matches, they should tell an adult immediately.

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6. Use Electricity Safely



If an appliance smokes or begins to smell unusual, unplug it immediately and have it repaired. Check all your electrical cords, and replace any that are cracked or frayed. If you use extension cords, replace any that are cracked or frayed; and

don't overload them or run them under rugs. Remember that fuses and circuit breakers protect you from fire: don't tamper with the fuse box or use fuses of an improper size.

9. Crawl Low Under Smoke

If you encounter smoke using your primary exit, use your alternate route instead. If you must exit through smoke, clean air will be several inches off the floor. Get down on your hands and knees, and crawl to the nearest safe exit.



7. Stop, Drop, and Roll

Everyone should know this rule: if your clothes catch fire, don't



run! Stop where you are, drop to the ground, and roll over and over to smother the flames. Cover your face with your hands to protect your face and lungs.

8. Cool a Burn



If someone gets burned, immediately place the wound in cool water for 10 to 15 minutes to ease the pain. Do not use butter on a burn, as this could prolong the heat and further damage the skin. If the skin blisters or chars, see a doctor immediately.

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10. Practice Candle Safety

The popularity of candles as home decorations in recent years has resulted in an increase in candle related fires. **Some safety tips include:** Never leave a lit candle unattended in any room of the house; never leave candles burning when you go to bed; and never use candles near combustible materials such as curtains, drapes, bedding and cabinets.

Fire Prevention Needs Your Attention!

Kitchen

- ◆ All electrical appliances and tools should have a testing agency label. Have the appliances repaired if they aren't working right. If an appliance gets wet, have it serviced.
- ◆ Check the cords on all appliances. If they are worn or frayed, have them repaired.
- ◆ Don't overload the outlets.
- ◆ Make sure appliance cords are kept on the counter to prevent them from being pulled down by young children.
- ◆ Don't store things over the stove. People get burned while reaching.
- ◆ Turn pot handles so children can't pull them down.
- ◆ Wear tight sleeves when cooking. Loose-fitting garments can catch fire.
- ◆ Check to see if curtains or towel racks are close to the stove.
- ◆ Check to see if the stove and oven are clean of grease and oil.
- ◆ Be sure a fire extinguisher is placed in the kitchen.
- ◆ All cleaning products and other chemicals should be stored out of the reach of young children, not under the sink. Cleaning products and other chemicals also should be stored separately from foods.
- ◆ Be sure microwave ovens have room to "breathe."

Living room or family room

- ◆ Be sure portable space heaters are at least three feet away from anything that can catch fire including walls and curtains.
- ◆ Use a metal or glass fireplace screen. Have the chimney checked and cleaned regularly.
- ◆ Put lighters and matches where small children won't find them.
- ◆ Ashtrays that are too small or too full can be a hazard. Ashtrays should be large, deep and emptied frequently, but only when all signs of heat and burning are gone.
- ◆ Before going to bed, look under/between cushions for burning cigarettes. Check carpeting around where ashtrays have been used.
- ◆ Allow plenty of air space around the TV and stereo to prevent overheating. If these appliances are not working correctly, be sure to have them repaired. In the meantime, unplug them.
- ◆ Check for worn or frayed extension cords or other electrical cords.
- ◆ Extension cords should not run under rugs and carpets or be looped over nails or other sharp objects that could cause them to fray.

Did you know...

- ◆ Fire doubles in size every 30 seconds.
- ◆ Over 2 million fires are reported to fire departments each year.
- ◆ There has been as much as \$7 billion in property damage each year due to fire, despite the use of sprinklers and smoke alarms.
- ◆ We lose our sense of smell when we are sleeping.
- ◆ Almost 40% of fire victims die in their sleep.

- ◆ Check for overloaded outlets or extension cords.
- ◆ Electrical sockets should be covered with a child-proof fitting.
- ◆ Lamp and light fixtures should be used with bulbs with wattage at or below the maximum prescribed by the manufacturer.

Bedrooms

- ◆ Smoke detectors should be tested regularly to be sure they are functioning correctly.
- ◆ Have a working flashlight next to each bed.
- ◆ Again, check for overloaded outlets, extension cords and heaters that are too close to combustible items.
- ◆ Each member of the family should know what to do in the event of a fire.
- ◆ Do all family members know the fire escape plan?
- ◆ Plan two escapes routes from each bedroom in case of a fire.
- ◆ If you smoke, DO NOT smoke in bed.

Bathroom

- ◆ Check for overloaded extension cords and outlets.
- ◆ Don't place or use any appliances near water.

Fatality Summary as of April 08



Precaution is better than cure.
Edward Coke

