

Apartment Safety

Burns

Calling 9-1-1

Car Seat Safety

Carbon Monoxide

Cool-Off Safety

Escape Plans and Fire Drills

Fireworks

Gasoline Safety Halloween

Safety Holiday and Heating

Safety Holiday Cooking

Safety Lawn and Garden

Safety Scalds and Burns

Smoke Alarms

Smoke Safety

Stop, Drop, and Roll

Winter Storm Safety

## **Apartment Safety**

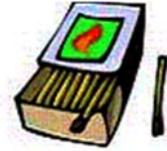
Many times, apartments have only one way to get in or out. Therefore, working smoke alarms are especially important. Make sure you have a fire escape plan and a meeting place set up for your family. Familiarize yourself with the location of fire extinguishers in your apartment complex and learn how to use them. Never park in fire lanes or block fire hydrants.

## **Burns**



Burns can come from many sources including flames, scalds, chemicals, electricity and the sun. There are three types of burns. First-degree burns are superficial burns that are pink or red and painful but cause only minor damage to the skin. They usually heal within 3-5 days. Second-degree burns are more serious. They damage the top two layers of skin; blisters may be present and there will be pain and swelling. These may require a physician's care depending on the size of the area covered by the burn. The most serious burn is the

third-degree burn. This burn destroys all layers of the skin. The skin may be very bright red or dry and leathery, charred, waxy white tan or brown. There will be no sensitivity in the burned area because of nerve damage. These burns will require a physician's care and will need skin grafts to heal.



The best immediate treatment for a burn is to hold the burned area under cool water. Do not use ointment, grease, or butter on a burn. They can confine the heat of the burn and keep the area from cooling. After a burn has been cooled, an antiseptic may be applied to help prevent infection. There is only one exception to the "Cool a Burn" rule, which is a burn by lime powder. In that cause, brush the lime off the skin and rinse with water. If a burn is serious, call 911.

### **Calling 9-1-1**

There are several things to remember when calling 911. Call only if you have an emergency, which requires immediate help from the fire department, the police department or the EMS (Emergency Medical Services). You should always be prepared to give the nature of the emergency, your name, the address of the emergency and the number from which you are calling. Stay on the phone until the 911 dispatcher hangs up.

### **Car Seat Safety**

The back seat is the safest place for any child under the age of 12, especially if the vehicle has passenger-side air bags. Always make sure that your child is in an approved car safety seat, facing the correct direction. Make sure your child safety seats are installed correctly.

Infants under the age of one and under 20 pounds should always ride in the back seat, in a rear-facing child safety seat.

Children less than 8 years who weigh less than 80 pounds must ride in a weight-appropriate child safety seat or booster seat.

### **Carbon Monoxide**

Did you know that approximately 24 children, ages 14 and younger, die from carbon monoxide poisoning each year? In 1999, an estimated 3,400 children in this age group were treated in hospital emergency rooms for CO poisoning.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that is a by-product of incomplete combustion of natural gas, gasoline, oil, wood, propane, coal and kerosene. Carbon monoxide replaces oxygen in the blood and can cause brain damage, short-term memory loss, learning disabilities, coma, or even death. Symptoms of CO-poisoning, including headache, fatigue, nausea and dizziness, are often mistaken for the flu. If you

feel better when you leave your home and symptoms come back when you return, you may suspect CO poisoning.

Infants and children are especially vulnerable to carbon monoxide poisoning because they have higher metabolic rates and the gas accumulates in their bodies faster than in adults. Unborn babies have an even higher risk of birth defects, neurological disorders and death when the mother is exposed to carbon monoxide.

Sources of carbon monoxide in the home include malfunctioning furnaces, water heaters, ovens stoves, gas-fired dryers, clogged chimneys, corroded flue pipes, and unvented space heaters. Automobiles left running in attached garages also pose a hazard, even if the garage doors are open.

The Hickory Fire Department offers these tips to protect your child from carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Install a UL-approved carbon monoxide detector. It's estimated that CO detectors could prevent half of all CO poisoning deaths. An adult should install the detector in every sleeping area and on each level of the home.
- If the CO alarm goes off, leave the home immediately and call the fire department or your local utility company. If a family member displays symptoms of CO poisoning, seek medical assistance immediately.
- Remember to keep fuel-burning household appliances regularly inspected and properly maintained. Have your chimney cleaned annually before cold weather arrives.
- Never use an oven to heat your home.

### **Cool-Off Safety**



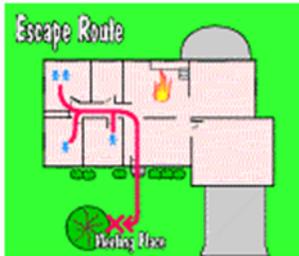
Trying to beat the heat in the summer? If your plans include cooling off with a portable electric fan or window air conditioner, the National Electrical Safety Foundation (NESF) and the Hickory Fire Department recommend you take a few minutes to conduct a safety check before using these appliances.

- Your electric fan should have guards or enclosures, which are securely fastened. Grill openings should be small enough so that fingers, especially children's small fingers, cannot accidentally touch the moving fan blade.
- Read and follow the manufacturer's safety and operating instructions before using the product. Keep the instructions handy in case you have questions about the maintenance of your fan.
- Check for frayed cords or broken plugs. If you spot these hazards, don't use the fan. Touching even a single exposed strand of wire can give you an electric shock or burn if the fan is plugged in.
- Place the fan on a level, stable surface.

- Position the fan and cord so the fan won't be bumped or knocked over by people or pets walking through the room.
- When using a window air conditioner, check for any cracks or deterioration in the power cord insulation. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for correct installation.
- Air conditioners operate at either 110 or 220 volts -- never tamper with the plug or wiring to try to get the unit to operate from outlets that do not match the plug's configuration. If new wiring or a different outlet is needed, have it installed by a qualified electrician in accordance with the National Electrical Code (NEC).
- Like other electrical products, electric fans and room air conditioners have one function - to provide or circulate cool air. Never use them to dry clothing or other materials.
- Limit your use of extension cords. These devices are intended for occasional use only. If you must use an extension cord, make sure it is properly rated to safely handle the current drawn by the product.

By following these suggestions, the Hickory Fire Department hopes you will have a cooler and safer summer.

### **Escape Plans and Fire Drills**



Everyone should know their home and the best way to get out of it in case of a fire. Design a fire escape plan that works for you and your family. Review the plan and have practice fire drills to make sure everyone knows what to do and where to go. Plan two ways out of each room in case your first route is blocked by smoke or fire. Pick a designated meeting place outside your home where family members will go in case of a fire. Having everyone in the same place will let you know if all people are out of the house. Remember when designing your escape plan that very young, elderly or handicapped family members may need special assistance in getting out.

If you live in a building with an elevator, never use the elevator in the event of a fire. Take the stairs instead.

Smoke alarms provide a warning when there is a fire. Make sure you have working smoke alarms on each floor of your home and in the bedroom areas. Family members should know what a smoke alarm is and how it sounds. You should check your smoke alarms once a month to make sure they are working and change the batteries at least once a year.

### **Fireworks**

Fourth of July, New Years Eve and other celebrations are times when people enjoy watching fireworks. Yes, fireworks can be fun to see, but they also can be very dangerous. To keep your celebration from

turning into a tragedy, the Hickory Fire Department recommends that you leave fireworks to professionals. However, if you do plan to use fireworks, please use the following precautions:

- Always read and follow label directions.
- A responsible adult should be the person using fire works and children should be only observers.
- Purchase fireworks from a reliable dealer.
- Ignite outdoors only.
- Have water handy to extinguish fires or soothe burns.
- Never experiment or attempt to make your own fireworks.
- Light only one firework at a time.
- Never re-ignite malfunctioning fireworks and be extremely cautious of ones that do not work the first time.
- Do not permit children to handle fireworks.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place and dispose of properly.
- Never throw fireworks at another person.
- Never carry fireworks in your pocket or shoot them in metal or glass containers.



According to a report released by the National Fire Protection Association, fireworks caused over 11,000 reported injuries in the United States last year and the majority of those injuries involved fireworks that are legal under the current federal law. For an example, sparklers, which are often considered safe, can reach temperatures higher than 1200 degrees Fahrenheit.

### **Gasoline Safety**

Nearly 14,000 people are treated each year for burn injuries related to the misuse of gasoline.

REMEMBER: gasoline has only ONE proper use - to power vehicles or machinery. Gasoline is highly volatile! Just one gallon of gasoline is equivalent to 14 sticks of dynamite in explosive force. When using gasoline, follow these safety tips for the protection of you and your family:

- Never use gasoline around a flame source. Be particularly aware of often forgotten sources such as matches, cigarettes and pilot lights.
- Use gasoline only outdoors or in a well-ventilated area.
- Start barbecue fires with fuels labeled as charcoal starters - never use gasoline.
- Fill the tanks of gasoline-powered equipment, such as power mowers, when they are turned off and cool - running engines can spark and cause ignition of the gasoline.
- Don't transport gasoline in your automobile - a fiery explosion may result if there is a collision.

- Never siphon gasoline by mouth - even a few drops inhaled into the lungs may cause death.
- To clean grease off hands, use industrial strength hand cleaner - never gasoline.
- If gasoline is spilled on clothing, change clothes immediately and wash the clothing - even when the clothing appears to be dry, the material may still contain enough gasoline to present a serious hazard.
- Never store gasoline in the house or garage. If you must store gasoline, do so only in well-ventilated areas away from the house. Use only approved safety cans, which have flame arresters and pressure-release valves. Never use glass or plastic bottles for gasoline storage.
- Keep gasoline locked up when not in use. Always keep it out of reach of children. If gasoline is swallowed do not induce vomiting, seek medical attention immediately.



### **Halloween Safety**



Warning! In October ghost and goblins (also known as "trick-or-treaters") will be roaming the country to find treats on Halloween. Before sending "trick-or-treaters" out, parents should take precautions to ensure the safety of these goblins.

The Hickory Fire Department suggests the following:

- When purchasing a Halloween costume and mask, make sure they are labeled flameproof. The fabric used in costumes is usually a thin material and very easily ignited. Remind children to keep away from open flames such as jack-o-lanterns.
- Use a flashlight in your jack-o-lantern instead of a candle. A flashlight should provide a good light and the danger of knocking it over and being burned will be eliminated.
- Make sure children carry a flashlight and not a candle to light their way. Parents can purchase reflective strips to place on children so they are visible to drivers.
- Remind your child to pay special attention to traffic on Halloween night and obey all traffic signals. Parents should definitely accompany young children as they go trick-or-treating.
- Make sure children go only in familiar neighborhoods while looking for treats.
- Always help children check their treats carefully before eating them.

### **Holiday and Heating Safety**



When Catawba County residents think of winter, we often think of holiday parties, festive decorations, and glowing fireplaces. What we may not realize is that December, January and February are the leading months for home fires and home fire deaths in the U.S. On average, more than one-third of U.S. home fire deaths occur during the winter months.

The nonprofit National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) statistics show that heating equipment fires are the second leading cause of fire deaths in American homes, but during the winter, they are the number-one culprits. Tens of thousands of home heating fires kill hundreds of people on average each year.

According to NFPA, home heating fires are most commonly caused by inadequate chimney cleaning; placing things that can burn too close to space and portable heaters; fueling errors involving liquid- or gas-fueled heaters; and flaws in the design, installation or use of heating equipment.

The good news is that most of these fires are preventable. It's simply a matter of being aware that these hazards exist, and taking the few steps necessary to avoid them.

Firefighters recommend the following:

- Have all home heating systems and chimneys inspected annually and cleaned, if necessary, before the start of each heating season.
- If you use space or portable heaters, keep anything that can burn, including people, pets, and furniture, at least three feet away on all sides of the heater.
- When leaving the room or going to sleep make sure to turn the heaters off.

### **Holiday Cooking Safety**

The Hickory Fire Department would like to remind you all of some safety precautions to help your Holiday Season be as safe as possible.

- When cooking those holiday meals, please remember to have a fire extinguisher in your kitchen. Make sure that the extinguisher is charged and readily accessible. The extinguisher should be rated for A, B, and C. fires. This can be affirmed by looking at the side of the extinguisher.
- Remember, if a grease fire occurs, simply cover it with a lid. Do not attempt to extinguish with water or any other extinguishing agent, as this will aid in the spread of the fire.
- If you feel that a kitchen fire is not extinguishable, evacuate the residence immediately and notify the fire department by dialing 911 from a neighbor's house or from a cell phone.
- Keep the kitchen as safe as possible by turning pot handles in toward the stove. This will help prevent the possibility of the pans being knocked off the stove causing severe burns. Keep stoves clean and free from grease and crumbs.
- Don't leave food unattended on the stove.
- Make sure that all electrical cords are maintained so they will not be shock hazards.



This is also a great time to ensure that your smoke detectors are working correctly.

## **Lawn and Garden Safety**



The Hickory Fire Department reminds residents there are safe practices to follow to avoid injury when doing lawn and garden projects. This advice from the nonprofit Home Safety Council can help keep families safer outdoors:

- Wear proper eye protection when using power tools; avoid loose or dangling clothing that can be caught in moving parts; use earplugs with loud equipment.
- Keep mowers and power tools "off limits" to young children.
- Store pesticides and all lawn products in original packaging on high shelves or inside locked cabinets.
- Store ladders, rakes, forks, clippers and other tools properly; return them to storage after use.
- Keep children well away when mowing and never let them ride on mowing tractors.
- Check the yard for broken limbs, stones and toys that can shoot out under the mower; wear closed-toe shoes when mowing to prevent injury.
- Refuel mowers and other gasoline-powered tools outside, when the motor is cool, and well away from lit cigarettes, sparks and flames.
- Never reach under a mower when it is turned on.

Use gasoline as a motor fuel only; store gasoline in an approved, vented container, up high.

## **Scalds and Burns**

Over 1.55 million burn injuries occur each year in the U.S. and Canada with over 100,000 people treated in hospitals and emergency facilities for scald burns every year. A majority of these burns are caused by contact with hot tap water and hot liquid spills. Children under the age of five and adults over 65 are often the most seriously and frequently affected.

The National Burn Awareness Coalition and the Hickory Fire Department urge citizens to take the following steps to reduce these serious burn injuries:

- Lower your water heaters to 120 ° F or less. At 160 ° F it takes less than one second to get a third degree burn ... at 120 ° F it's almost impossible.
- Install tempering valves in either the water line or bathtub. It's best to use a valve, which regulates the temperature and pressure.
- Before placing a child in the bathtub, test the temperature of the bath water by moving your hand through the water for several seconds. If the water feels hot, add cold water until the temperature feels comfortable.
- Do not leave young children alone in the bathroom or near portable appliances such as coffee pots, electric frying pans, etc.

- Keep children at a safe distance while drinking or pouring hot liquids.
- Test all hot food and drink before feeding your child, especially if heated in the microwave. Do not hold a child while testing... hot foods or drinks which can easily spill?

### **Smoke Alarms**

Smoke alarms save lives. They are mounted on the wall or ceiling and will sound when they sense smoke. These devices warn people early enough so they may escape from a fire. They usually are priced six dollars and up. About two-thirds of fire deaths happen in the victim's own home. Most of the deaths occur from breathing in smoke or other poisonous gases. Most fires in residential buildings occur between 11pm and 6am, when people are sleeping. A Johns Hopkins University study, funded by the United States Fire Administration, found that 75 percent of residential fire deaths and 84 percent of residential fire injuries could have been prevented by smoke detectors. There are two basic types of smoke detectors:

- Ionization detectors - Ionization detectors contain radioactive material that ionizes the air, making an electrical path. When smoke enters, the smoke molecules attach themselves to the ions. The change in electric current flow triggers the alarm. The radioactive material is called americium. It's a radioactive metallic element produced by bombardment of plutonium with high-energy neutrons. The amount is very small and not harmful.
- Photoelectric detectors - These types of detectors contain a light source (usually a bulb) and a photocell, which is activated by light. Light from the bulb reflects off the smoke particles and is directed towards the photocell. The photocell then is activated to trigger the alarm.

Choosing the correct smoke detector is very important. It is recommended that a smoke detector be placed outside each sleeping area and on each level of a house, including the basement. On floors without sleeping areas, detectors should be placed in areas such as dens, living rooms, and family rooms. It is recommended that you don't use a smoke detector in a kitchen. It is easy to find detectors that are a combination smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector. Make sure that your detector is easy to maintain. Be sure to keep smoke detectors away from wood stoves and fireplaces; this will help reduce false alarms. Smoke rises easily so you should have a smoke detector at the top of a stair well. If you mount your detector on the ceiling, be sure to keep it at least 18 inches away from dead air space near walls and corners. If you mount it on the wall, place it six to 12 inches below the ceiling and away from corners. Don't place detectors near air registers, doorways, or windows where a draft could cause the detector to fail. Always check your batteries once a month; most models make a chirping noise when the batteries are low. Replace batteries at least once a year, preferably at a time you will remember from year to year such as when the time changes from standard to daylight savings.

### **Smoke Safety**

Smoke rises. Smoke detectors are put on the ceilings because smoke will begin to accumulate around the ceiling. This is something that all firefighters know and why they usually enter a burning house on their hands and knees, so they can see well. Most fatalities in a fire are from smoke inhalation. There are

many different poisonous gases found in smoke such as carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, hydrogen cyanide, and hydrogen sulfide. When someone inhales these poisons they lose muscle control, and judgment and reasoning are impaired. These gases, hot air, and smoke may cause people to make bad decisions. If you find yourself in a building with smoke, drop down to your hands and knees to find the nearest exit. If you come to a closed door, use the back of your hand to test for heat. If it hot turn around and find another way out. Use the walls of a building to help guide you out of a smoke filled building.

### **Stop, Drop, and Roll**

There are more than 15,000 people each year that are seriously injured by their clothing being caught on fire. When your clothes or someone else's catch fire, action must be taken immediately. NEVER run. To minimize injury you should STOP, DROP, and ROLL. Burns are the third leading cause of unintentional death in the US and can be very painful. There are some body parts that are at higher risk because they are delicate structures; these include the hands, groin, face, and lungs. Some clothes catch on fire easier such as loose fitting clothes or a fluffy pile will ignite faster than tight fitting, denser fabrics. Fabrics such as nylon, once ignited, melt and burn the skin causing severe burns. There are four rules to STOP, DROP, and ROLL.

- Stop; do not run, if your clothes catch on fire.
- Drop to the floor in a prone position.
- Cover your face with your hands to protect it from the flames.
- Roll over and over to smother the fire. Don't stop until the flames have been extinguished.



### **Winter Storm Safety**



Winter weather can bring extremely cold weather including ice, snow, and high winds to many areas of our state. To help deal with these conditions, the Hickory Fire Department offers the following advice:

- If your power goes out, use a flashlight instead of candles. More people have died after winter storms from residential fires caused by candles than from the direct effects of the storm itself.
- Use portable space heating equipment very carefully. Heaters should be placed at least three feet away from any combustible material, including drapes, carpeting, and furniture. Do not drape gloves, socks, or other clothing over a space heater to dry.

- Remember to always turn off space heaters before leaving home or going to bed. For their safety, children and pets should be kept away from heating equipment.
- Fuel-filled equipment such as kerosene heaters should be filled outdoors and only when they are completely cool.
- Do not use gas grills, generators, or open flames inside your home. These items create carbon monoxide, which can cause death. Also make sure you install a carbon monoxide detector in your home.
- Have essential supplies, including flashlights, a radio, first aid kit, protective clothing and winter wear, canned foods, and at least three gallons of water (preferably more). Also listen to Weather Radio, The Weather Channel, and local television broadcasts for the latest information about storm conditions.
- Plan to stay at home during bad weather, but if you must drive and become stuck, stay with your car. Do not try to walk to safety



For more information  
call the Hickory Fire Department  
at (828) 323-7420.