

## SCFD Home Safety Video – December 3, 2009 (8 min 22 sec)

Sounds of a call dispatched from 911. Sirens and then music.

### Home Fire Safety

Hi, I'm Glendon Thompson, Sedgwick County Fire District # 1. Every year more Americans die in home fires than all other natural disasters combined. But did you know that over half of those deaths could be avoided. How? One way is to learn to find and correct fire hazards in your home. So come with us as we learn how to play it safe in your home. Before we enter this home, I would like to remind you that it is very important to have your home address clearly visible from the street. You can post it on the structure as we see right here or you can put it on both sides of your mailbox. That way as emergency vehicles approach, we can identify your home quickly and clearly, as we respond to the emergency.

### Kitchen Safety

You may not think of your kitchen as a particularly dangerous place, but more house fires start in the kitchen than in any other room in the home. Cooking is the number one cause of house fires in the US and also the leading cause of home related fire injuries. Cooking fires more often result from unattended cooking and human error than from the mechanical failure of stoves and ovens. By taking a few simple safety precautions and paying special attention when cooking you can avoid having a kitchen fire in your home.

1. Never leave cooking food on the stove top unattended. If you are called away from the kitchen while cooking to answer the door bell, or telephone, or attend to a child that needs attention, turn off all your burners. (He turns to turn off the burners). You can continue cooking once you've taken care of your distraction.
2. Never place or store combustible items on the range or in the oven. Such things as plastic cooking utensils and cutting boards get stuck in the oven sometimes just because of a lack of a place to put them to get them off the counter. Keep your plastic utensils off the stove top as well. We often encounter fires that are started when someone takes a plastic trash can and sets it on the stove to keep it out of the reach of pets or children as well.
3. You should wear short and close fitting or tightly rolled sleeves while cooking. Loose clothing can dangle into the burners and catch fire.
4. Turn your pot handles in so they are out of the reach of children or as you are working in the kitchen you might accidentally bump it.
5. We need to keep those cooking areas clean. Need to be cleaned frequently including inside your oven. Built up grease can catch fire. Let's talk about grease fires. When cooking with grease you need to keep a lid handy preferably the one that goes with the pan that you are cooking with, or keep a cookie sheet near by as well. These can be used to remove the oxygen from the fire. If the grease catches on fire, place the lid on the pan and either

- remove it from the heat, if you can get close enough to it, or shut your burner off, if not, simply step back for a minute and wait for it to subside.
6. You should mount an ABC Dry Chemical extinguisher, at eye level, near the exit of your kitchen, away from the stove. In relation to the grease fire, if you are having troubles getting it to go out with your lid or just removing it from the heat, you can use your dry chem extinguisher. It should be mounted in an easily accessible area away from the stove, but on the way out of your kitchen. This seems to be a good place for it, as I leave the stove, get away from it as well, I can reach back and grab the extinguisher if I need to. And of course, if things get out of hand quickly, please call 911.

### Heating Safety

Safety should be the number one consideration when heating your home. Prior to the start of every heating season have your homes heating system checked by a qualified professional. Also inspect and clean fireplaces, wood stoves and their chimneys. Convenience and cost savings have increased the popularity of alternate and potentially dangerous sources of heating. Such as portable space heaters, kerosene heaters and wood burning stoves. These devices must be used according to their instruction and with extreme caution. Keep children and pets away from all heating sources. The following suggestions are recommended when using alternate heat sources. Allow enough clearance from combustible materials such as walls, floor coverings, ceilings, curtains and furniture. Make sure the flue is open before lighting a fire and don't close the flue until the fire is completely out. Don't leave space heaters operating when you are not in the room. When lighting a gas space heater, strike your match first and then turn on the gas. Don't use extension cords with electrical space heaters. The high amount of current they require could melt the cord and start a fire. Never use a gas range as a substitute for a furnace or space heater.

### Electrical Safety

Electrical fires in our homes claim the lives of 485 Americans each year and injure 2300 more. Some of these fires are caused by electrical system failures and appliance defects but many more are caused by the misuse and poor maintenance of electrical appliances. Incorrectly installed wiring and overloaded circuits and extension cords. It is better not to use extension cords, if you feel you must use one make sure it is not frayed or worn. Do not run it under a rug or twist it around a nail or a hook. Check periodically for loose wall receptacles, loose wires or loose wall receptacles. Sparking means you've waited too long. If a circuit breaker trips or a fuse blows frequently, immediately cut down the number of appliances on that line. In many older homes the capacity of the wiring system has not kept pace with today's modern appliances. Overloaded electrical systems invite fire. Watch for these overloaded signals: dimming lights when an appliance goes on, shrinking tv picture, slow heating appliances, or fuses blowing frequently. Call a qualified electrician to get expert help. Do not use light bulb wattage which is too high for the fixture. Look at the label inside each fixture which tells the maximum wattage.

## Smoking Safety

Smoking is the leading cause of home fire deaths. If you must smoke, be extremely careful and never smoke in bed or in a place where you might fall asleep. Use large deep ashtrays and empty them frequently. Never dump an ashtray in the trash without wetting the butts and ashes first. Keep lighters and matches out of the reach of children. Children are naturally curious about fire. So keep an eye on them. If a child repeatedly plays with a fire or seems to have a fascination with fire, call your local fire department at once for assistance in stopping this dangerous and life threatening behavior.

## Candle Safety

In recent years the number of fires that have been started by candles is staggering. Use common sense whenever you burn candles and remember...never leave a burning candle unattended even for just a little while. Keep all burning candles up high and out of reach of children and pets. Make sure the candles are placed on a sturdy piece of furniture in a heat resistant holder that will not tip over.

## Conclusion

The best way to practice fire safety is to make sure fire doesn't break out in the first place. I hope our tour today has made you more aware of potential hazards in your home and the steps that you can take to keep your home and family safe from fire.

Screen shows fire information.