

FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY

HOME CHECKLIST



Emergency numbers

107

or

(021) 480 7700

**CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD**

How safe is your home and family?

This fire and life safety checklist will help you identify potential hazards in your home. It also introduces good housekeeping practices that will significantly improve the fire safety of your home.

1. Answer the questions honestly
2. If you answered "NO" to any of the questions, take action before someone gets hurt.

For more information, contact your local fire station or our Fire and Life Safety Education Officers on (021) 703 3184 or email: lifesafety@capetown.gov.za.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO PROTECT THE ONES WE LOVE

FIRE DETECTION AND FIREFIGHTING

Yes No

Smoke Alarms:

Does your home have at least one smoke alarm to protect your family while you sleep? (Most house fires occur at night. Smoke alarms have reduced the fire death rate by 50% in the US and UK.)

Do you test the battery of your smoke alarm at least once a month, and change the battery every year?

Does everyone know the sound of the smoke alarm?

Fire Extinguishers:

Does your home have a fire extinguisher or a fire blanket approved by your local Fire Brigade? (Only SABS approval is acceptable.)

Has your fire extinguisher been tested by an SABS approved technician during the past 12 months?

Is your fire extinguisher stored in an accessible and convenient location? (Near an exit door)

Have you received training or advice from your local Fire Brigade on how to use your fire extinguisher safely?

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND ESCAPE PLANS

Yes No

Have you and your family practiced an escape plan? (This will speed up your escape and may save your life.)

If you have young children or family members with limited mobility, has someone been assigned to help them escape in the event of fire? (Young children and the elderly account for most fire deaths.)

Have your children practiced how to escape without adult help?

Do babysitters, caregivers and visitors all know the escape procedure in the event of a fire?

Do you practice your escape plan at least every six months?

Do you keep a torch readily available for use during a power failure or fire?

ESCAPING FROM FIRE

Yes No

Do you know that if a fire breaks out you must get everyone out of the house and then call the Fire Brigade?

Does everyone know that they should "get out, stay out" if a fire breaks out?(Leave behind all valuables and possessions. Make sure children know not to hide.)

Do you know that you should not attempt to fight the fire until the Fire Brigade has been called and only if there is no risk to yourself?

Does your family know the emergency number 107, and is 107 displayed on your telephone to assist children to call for help?

Does everyone know that they must crawl low under smoke to escape from fire? (Breathing in smoke can kill you. Cool air near the floor will help you breathe and crawl to safety.)

Do you have two ways to get out of the house in the event of fire?

Can your burglar bars open from the inside to prevent you from being trapped inside?

Are your windows, doors and floor kept free of any obstructions to allow easy exit in the event of fire?

Can you open doors quickly and are keys readily available to unlock doors? (Keep keys in doors and security gates or on hooks nearby.)

Do you know that if a fire breaks out in a room, you should close the door to limit the growth of the fire?

Do you sleep with your doors closed to prevent the spread of smoke and fire?

Do you know that if you are trapped by fire, you should close the door to your room and put a blanket or towel at the bottom of the door to keep out the smoke? Call for help from the window.

Will you remember to close all doors behind you when evacuating your home?

Does your family have a safe place to meet away from your home?

PREVENTING THE FIRE: HEAT AND FUEL

Yes No

Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG):

If you use gas do you limit your 19kg cylinders to one in use and one spare? (This is the maximum legal limit that you can keep on your property)

Has your gas installation been checked and certified by your local fire department? (If not, it is illegal and should be shut down).

Are children always supervised when gas, naked flame, oil heaters or open fires are present?

When lighting gas appliances do you light the match first before opening the gas?

Heaters:

Are heaters used in safe areas (where they can't be knocked over and items can't fall on them) at least 1m away from furniture, furnishings and other things that can burn? (Radiated heat causes many house fires.)

Do you turn heaters off when you leave the house and when you are sleeping?

Do you avoid drying your clothes on or near heaters?

Do you keep a window slightly open in rooms where paraffin or gas heaters are in use? (Open flame heaters consume oxygen and produce poisonous gases.)

Are curtains kept away from heat sources and possible ignition?

Do you use and store electric blankets according to the manufacturers instructions (switched off when you are in bed, serviced regularly, and not used with hot water bottles)?

Yes No

Cooking:

Do you make sure you never leave cooking food unattended? (Many fires are caused by food left unattended on a stove; especially oil.)

When deep frying, do you keep your pot less than one third full of oil? (This lowers the risk of hot oil boiling over onto your stove.)

Does everyone know that you should use a damp cloth to smother a cooking oil fire? (Don't put water on oil fires — it will explode.)

Do you avoid wearing loose fitting clothing whilst cooking?

Has everyone practiced how to "stop, drop and roll" if their clothing catches on fire? (Don't run — this makes the fire worse.)

Are pans used in a safe position on the stove? (Turn handles inwards — but not over a hot area — so they can't be knocked over and are out of reach of children.)

Are flexes from toasters, kettles and other electrical items kept away from the stove?

Is the area above and around your stove free from items that can burn?

Are items that attract children (sweets and biscuits) stored away from your cooking areas (so children aren't tempted to climb onto hot surfaces)?

Do you extinguish braai fires when you have finished cooking?

Does everyone know that you need to cool a burn? (Act fast. Put it in cold water for at least 20 minutes>)

Fireplaces:

Has your fireplace been installed correctly? (Many fires occur due to poor installation. People also die of carbon monoxide poisoning when gas appliances are installed without sufficient ventilation.)

Are fireguards placed around open fires? (Keep combustible items away from the fireguard and avoid drying clothes in this way.)

Are mirrors hung away from fireplaces or other sources of heat? (Don't stand too close to the fire you could set your clothing alight.)

PREVENTING THE FIRE : ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Yes No

Are all electrical items that are not in use switched off and unplugged? (Electrical faults account for a large number of fires especially at night.)

Are tv's, hifi's and other electrical appliances switched off and not left on standby mode?

Are electric irons and other appliances sufficiently cooled before being stored?

Do you have enough plugs in each room to limit the use of adaptors and cables and prevent overloading?

Are plug sockets and extension cords overloaded?
(One socket, one plug. You could overheat a socket and start a fire by putting several adaptors into one socket. High power equipment can overload extension cords.)

Are electrical cords and flexes in good condition with frayed or damaged cords being replaced and not simply repaired?

If extension cords are used: are they used safely (not under carpets or across doorways)?

Are extension cords properly secured (and not by means of nails or staples)?

Do you avoid taking portable electrical equipment into the bathroom to prevent electrical shocks?

Are all electrical appliances SABS approved?

Do all indicator warning lights on stoves and appliances work to indicate that the appliance is on or off?

Do you carry out a safety inspection of your home and correct all the faults on a regular basis?

PREVENTING THE FIRE : SAFE PRACTICES

Yes No

If anyone smokes inside your home, do you have sufficient large, deep, non-tip ashtrays?

Do you make sure you never leave a lit cigarette or pipe unattended? (They may fall onto a chair or carpet.)

Is "No Smoking in bed" a rule in your home?
(It is easy to fall asleep when smoking in a bed or in an armchair.)

Are all ashtrays emptied on a regular basis into a suitable metal container?

Do you avoid placing ashtrays on chair arms where they can be knocked over?

Are matches and lighters kept locked away -
"out of reach, out of sight and out of mind" of children?

Do you make sure that young children are never left alone at home?

If you must have candles in your home, are these candles for decoration only and if lit are they never left unattended?

HOT WATER HAZARDS

Yes No

Are kettles, pans, cups, etc kept out of reach of young children?
(Hot water is responsible for most burns in the home.)

When bathing young children, do you first add the cold water before adding the hot?

Is your hot water geyser thermostat set below 55 degrees Celsius?

Are taps correctly colour coded and do children know the difference between hot and cold water taps?

Have all babies been "drownproofed" and do all children know how to swim?

Does your swimming pool have a pool net?

Do you have a pool fence with a self-closing gate?
(This is a legal requirement as many children drown at home.
First aid training would be useful.)

SAFE STORAGE

Yes No

Are all household chemicals stored in suitable containers and kept away from children?

Are all medicines stored in child proof containers and kept away from children?

Are all guns locked away in a safe that is SABS approved?

Do you keep storage areas such as sheds, cupboards, loft areas free from paper, furniture, rags and other things that can burn?

Are combustibles such as petrol, thinners and paints kept to a minimum, sealed and stored safely away from ignition sources?

Are pool chemicals kept in a safe place away from brake fluid and other items?

Is your loft insulated with non-combustible material and are combustibles that you store in the loft kept to a minimum?

Is your roof non-combustible? If you have a thatch roof, has it been treated with a fire retardant?

OUTSIDE SAFETY

Yes No

Do you dispose of all garden waste correctly?
(It is illegal to burn any bush, grass, trees or rubbish.)

Are all bushes, overgrown grass and trees kept at least 15m from your home? (A fire break is critical especially on the urban fringe.)

Do you have a hosepipe that can reach all areas of your property, and is it connected to a tap at all times?

Do you know where to find the nearest fire hydrant to your home?

Is the fire hydrant cover and road marking clearly visible and is the hydrant accessible at all times? (Parking cars over hydrants is illegal and causes delays for the Fire Brigade.)

Is the number of your house clearly visible from the road?

This checklist was produced by the City of Cape Town Fire and Life Safety Section.
This checklist is also available in Afrikaans and Xhosa.