



# Preventing Fire

## Did you know?

Each year, fires claim many lives and cost thousands of dollars in damage. Some of these tragedies could be avoided.

- Some installed smoke detectors may not be in good operating condition. And many homes are still not equipped with smoke detectors.
- Common causes of fire are carelessness or accidents with combustible materials or cooking and heating equipment; malfunction of electrical equipment; smoking; and mishandling of fire lighting materials.



- A few simple rules to help prevent fire**
- Remove all combustible and flammable materials from the basement and attic. Flammable materials like thinners, gasoline, paint and industrial cleaners should be properly stored in an approved container and placed in a ventilated location far from any ignition source.
  - Never store propane tanks or canisters (empty or full) indoors.
  - Never store propane tanks or canisters (empty or full) in a ventilated location far from any ignition source.
  - Do not use rechargeable batteries, as they can fall without warning.
  - Test smoke detectors monthly and clean them every six months.
  - Replace smoke detectors every 10 years.
  - Replace batteries at least once a year or, better yet, when daylight savings time begins in the spring and ends in the fall.
  - Establish a fire evacuation plan
  - Draw a diagram of your home, indicating two exits per room.
  - Unplug TV sets, small appliances, computers and other electronics. Some may become excessively hot, which may be dangerous.
  - In the winter, have someone you trust make daily visits to your home to ensure the heating system is working properly.
  - Don't leave Christmas tree or wreath lights on while you're away for the holidays.

## Going on vacation?

## Protect yourself against fire and carbon monoxide poisoning

- Check your smoke detectors
- Install carbon monoxide detectors
- Choose a detector certified by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (ULC).
- Make sure carbon monoxide detectors are installed near bedrooms.
- Do not use rechargeable batteries, as they can fall without warning.
- Test smoke detectors monthly and clean them every six months.
- Replace smoke detectors every 10 years.
- Replace batteries at least once a year or, better yet, when daylight savings time begins in the spring and ends in the fall.
- Establish a fire evacuation plan
- Draw a diagram of your home, indicating two exits per room.
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## Strengthen entry points

### Garage door



Always leave your garage door closed. If you plan to be away for a while, padlock the door tracks. And don't leave the garage door opener in your car; store it in your house instead.

### Peephole



A peephole lets you see who is at your door. Give children specific instructions not to answer the door when you're not home. Chain bolts may seem like a good idea but once the door is open, a good shove can easily break the latch.

### Double-hung windows



For double-hung windows, drill a downward-angled hole through the first sash and about halfway through the second. Immobilize the windows by inserting a large pin into the hole.

### Patio doors



Patio doors are vulnerable as they can be lifted and removed without much effort. Install a plate or screw in the upper track. Drill holes in the frame at the top and bottom to insert bolts. Get into the habit of sliding the bolts into place when the doors are closed. A piece of wood in the track may add further security.

### Reinforce your doors



The ideal doors have a solid core, with solid frame moulding on either side of the lock. If your door is hollow, consider having it replaced. One good kick may be enough to break your door down.

### Sliding windows



Sliding windows can be secured with a pin through the two sashes. Place a length of wood in the tracks. If you frequently open the window, fasten the pin to the sash with a chain.

### Front door



A front door that opens outward has hinges accessible from outside. To make them impossible to remove, flatten both ends of the pins or insert a screw in the centre.

## Extinguisher ABCs



- You should have at least one fire extinguisher in your home, but it's just as important to ensure you have the right type.
- Class A – Ordinary Combustibles**  
For fires originating from ordinary combustible materials like wood, paper, cardboard and plastic
- Class B – Flammable and Combustible Liquids**  
For fires originating from flammable or combustible liquids like gasoline, kerosene, grease, paint and oil
- Class C – Electrical Equipment**  
For fires originating from electrical wiring, overheated fuse boxes, conductors and other electrical sources
- Most residential extinguishers have multi-class ratings; in other words, the same extinguisher can be used for different types of fires. Remember that a fire extinguisher should only be used for small fires.
- Know how to use your fire extinguisher. Call 911 or have someone call for you before attempting to put out a fire on your own.**
- Pull the pin.
  - Aim downward.
  - Squeeze the lever.
  - Sweep from side to side, aiming toward the base of the fire.
- 30 days to ensure ...**
- The fire extinguisher is still in position.
  - Tamper seals are not broken or missing.
  - Discharge valves show no sign of degradation.
  - Corrosion, leakage or obstruction.
  - The pressure shown on the manometers (pressure gauges) is normal.
  - The date for the next professional inspection or servicing has not passed (typically every 12 months).
- Remember to keep records of each self-check in a registry or fire logbook.*

- Get rid of combustible waste**
- Do not leave combustibles in the furnace room.
  - Regularly dispose of anything that could cause a fire, including paints or solvents you no longer need or use.
  - Don't leave your dishwasher running when you're not home.
  - Unplug small appliances when not in use.
  - When cooking or baking, do not let children get within one metre (three feet) of the stove.
  - Turn pot handles inward to reduce the risk of over-turning a pot and to prevent children from reaching it.
  - Leave at least one metre (three feet) between combustible materials and space heaters.
  - Turn off space heaters when leaving a room.
- Allow space for space heaters**
- Do not plug too many appliances into a single outlet.
  - Do not use extension cords on a permanent basis.
  - Where they may be crushed or even cut.
  - Never run electrical cords under furniture or rugs.
  - Odours and open circuit breakers.
  - Be mindful of flickering lamps, bare wires, burning odours and open circuit breakers.
- Use your kitchen safely**
- Remind family members that in the event of a fire, they must get out and stay out.
  - Practice crawling to avoid heat and smoke.
  - Hold fire drills with family members.
  - Decide on a place where you can meet outside and call for help.
  - Moistan cigarette butts before disposing of them.
  - Use only wide, stable ashtrays.
  - Never smoke in bed.
- Be careful if you smoke**
- Ask children to let you know when they find matches or lighters. Remind them that such items are for adult use only.
  - Carbon monoxide in your home.
  - For heating, thereby increasing the possibility of carbon monoxide in your home.
  - Be vigilant during the winter months when your furnace, water heater/boiler or wood stove is used for heating, thereby increasing the possibility of carbon monoxide in your home.
  - Hide matches and lighters
  - Class C – Electrical Equipment

- In the event of fire**
- Never use an elevator during a fire. The shaft could fill with hot gases and smoke, and the controls could malfunction or stop working. Also, the elevator doors could open onto a hallway full of flames and smoke.
  - Before exiting your unit, carefully feel the doorknob. If it is hot, do not open it. If smoke is coming from underneath, block the crack with damp towels.
  - Remember that smoke generally rises. It may therefore be easier to breathe at floor level near an open window or on a balcony.
  - When leaving your unit, close the windows and doors if you can.
- If your clothes catch fire**
- Stop where you are. Do not run; movement may intensify the flames.
  - Drop to the ground.
  - Roll in a rug, blanket or coat to smother the flames.
  - Protect your face with your hands or a damp cloth.

## Safety rules for apartment buildings

- Prevention**
- If you live in an apartment building, make sure stairways and emergency exits are not blocked.
  - Locate fire alarm and pull, extinguishers and fire hoses.
  - Never throw a lit cigarette from a balcony. The wind could blow it into a lower window.
  - Put cigarette butts in a metal container with a metal lid. Don't put cigarette butts in pooled plants.
  - Municipal bylaws may prohibit barbecue use on your apartment or condo balcony. Check regulations within your area.
- In the event of fire**
- Never use an elevator during a fire. The shaft could fill with hot gases and smoke, and the controls could malfunction or stop working. Also, the elevator doors could open onto a hallway full of flames and smoke.
  - Before exiting your unit, carefully feel the doorknob. If it is hot, do not open it. If smoke is coming from underneath, block the crack with damp towels.
  - Remember that smoke generally rises. It may therefore be easier to breathe at floor level near an open window or on a balcony.
  - When leaving your unit, close the windows and doors if you can.

## Going on vacation?

- A few simple rules to help prevent theft**
- Ask a trusted neighbour or friend to collect your mail and newspapers, keep your sidewalk and driveway clear, and park his or her car in your driveway. You can also request that mail deliveries be stopped or re-routed to a different address until you return.
  - Consider light switch timers, especially multiple timers on a random setting. They are inexpensive and make your home appear lived in.
  - Installing a home security system and outdoor motion detectors may deter burglars from targeting your home.
  - Inspect your home before you leave. Put away bicycles and gardening or snow removal equipment, and be sure to lock your shed. Closely trim trees and shrubs to keep your house in plain view.
  - If loading luggage into your car, do so in your garage if possible, so you don't alert potential thieves you are leaving.
  - Leave curtains and/or blinds as you would normally keep them while at home but be sure to store any jewellery, valuables and important paperwork out of sight or in a home safe or bank safety deposit box. Noticeable changes in your home's typical appearance may hint that you are away.
  - Don't announce your vacation plans in casual conversations, in emails or on social networking sites.

## Did you know?

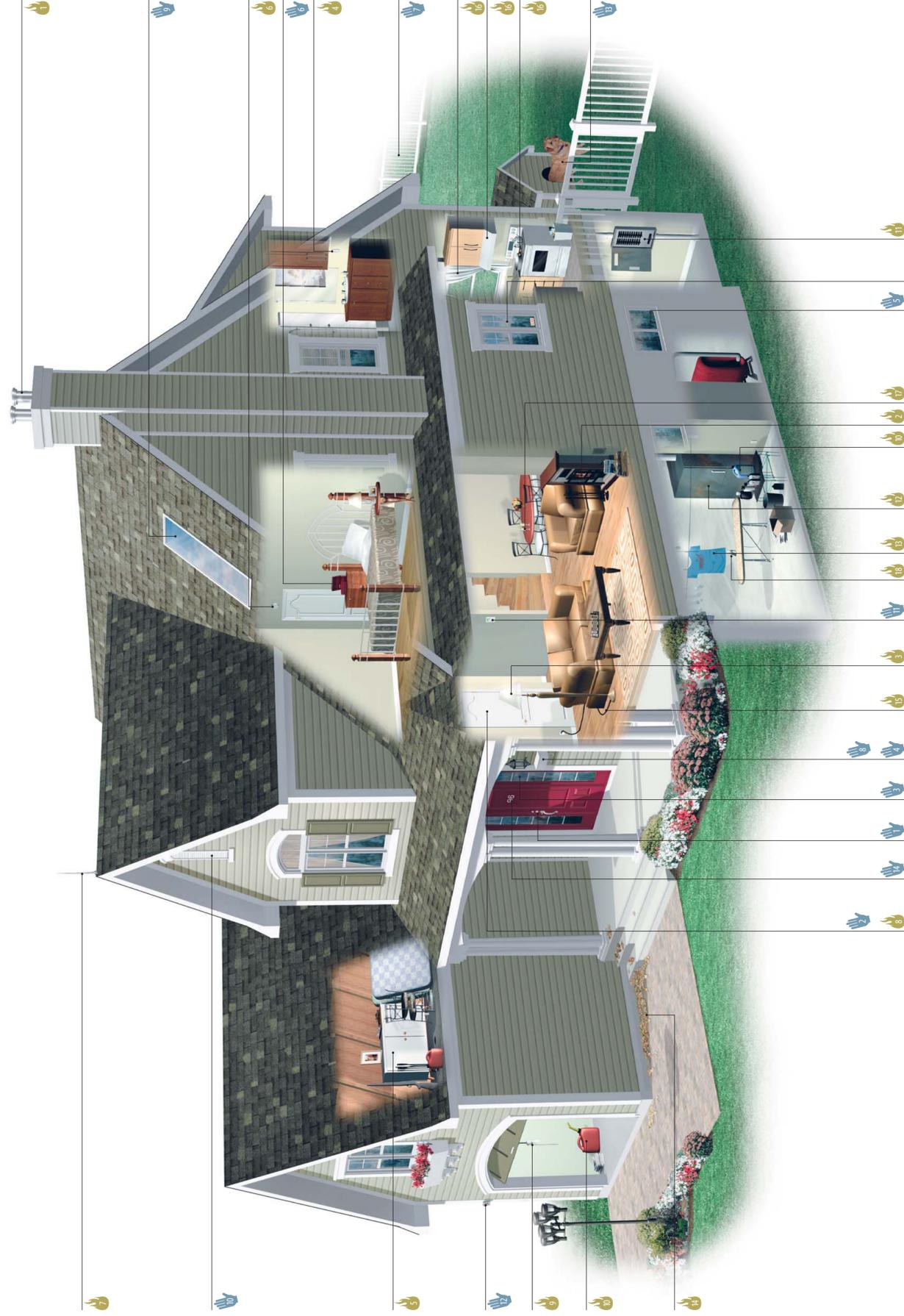
- According to Statistics Canada, break-ins account for a large portion of property crime in Canada. In most cases, burglars require very little time to break in.**
- Did you know... ?**
- Most burglars enter a home through an unlocked door or open window.
  - Most burglaries occur during the week, in daylight hours.
  - Your garage door opener may provide burglars with an easy point of entry to your home. When leaving your car in your driveway, be sure to take your garage door opener with you.



## Preventing Theft



# Smart Prevention



## Fire

1. Frequently inspect and clean chimney flues, particularly when burning oil, coal or wood.
2. A fireplace screen prevents sparks from hitting the floor and rugs.
3. Don't install a bulb with a higher wattage than the maximum indicated on the fixture.
4. Installing ground fault circuit interrupters is a good idea.
5. A cluttered attic creates perfect conditions for a fire. Clutter such as clothing, boxes, books, magazines and newspapers not only fuels a fire but prevents firefighters from gaining access to extinguish the flames.
6. Install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors outside bedrooms and on each floor of your home.
7. A lightning rod may be a wise investment if your home is built on an elevated or exposed site.
8. Your garage should be separated from the living quarters by a fire-resistant self-closing door.
9. Your garage should have properly wired light fixtures with a switch rather than makeshift installations with an extension cord.
10. Don't store gasoline, solvents, waste or other flammable materials near a furnace or in your garage. Store them in an outbuilding away from your home.

11. Ensure your fuses and circuit breakers work properly. Inspect aluminum wiring periodically.
12. If your home has a heating boiler, have it inspected and cleaned frequently. Do not block the air vent or damper; if your home has an oil tank, have it inspected periodically to ensure it is airtight so fuel oil does not overflow or leak.
13. Remove excess lint from the lint trap of your clothes dryer and keep the exhaust line clean.
14. Don't let dry leaves and debris collect near the outside wall of your home, particularly if you have wood or vinyl siding.
15. Have enough electrical outlets to avoid overloading the use of extension cords. If an extension cord is needed, don't run it under a rug.
16. When cooking, keep pot handles turned inward over the stove. Remove greasy buildup from the range hood and the filters. Keep curtains pulled back from any heating elements on the stove.
17. Don't leave lighted candles unattended or burning overnight.
18. Don't leave a clothing iron or hair straightening iron unattended.

## Theft

1. Take the time to research the best locks for your home. Consult a locksmith, if you have just moved into your home, replace the locks.
2. The door connecting your home to your garage should be as solid as your exterior doors.
3. Glass panels in doors should be replaced with break-resistant plastic panels or reinforced with grills.
4. If you have a mail slot in your front door, check that its location and size do not pose a security issue. Install an outside mailbox, if possible.
5. If you place grills on your windows, fasten them from the inside with easily removable pins so you can still get out in an emergency, such as a fire. Locking windows are a good investment.
6. Keep your valuables in an unpredictable spot. Check with your local police department for any programs available to help mark your valuables, discourage theft and identify stolen property.
7. High fences may be harder to climb but may also hide a burglary in process. Consider a fence that gives police or neighbours a clear view of your home's exterior.

8. Don't display your name on the front door or mailbox. It helps anyone who may want to phone to see if you're at home.
9. If you have skylights, make sure they are installed securely and equipped with a locking device similar to that on your doors.
10. Vents and all other openings should be equipped with secure locking devices.
11. An alarm system is an effective means of prevention. Once installed, have regular inspections conducted to ensure it works properly. Ensure your system has a backup source in the event of a power failure.
12. Light switch timers make your home appear lived in, even when you're on vacation.
13. Barking dogs deter burglars but a simple "BEWARE OF DOG" sign may also do the trick.
14. Make sure your house number is clearly visible not only on the front of your home but also on the back so that police can find your home quickly and easily.