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Spring Cleaning With A Purpose

Spring time is often a time where we catch up on some overlooked chores that we may have avoided during the winter months; If done properly, spring cleaning can dramatically improve the safety of your family in the event of a fire or emergency in your home.

To improve fire safety around the house, spend some time and reduce clutter in the garage or any other place it may have accumulated during the cold months; although clutter may not start fires it can easily become fuel for a fire, which will help the fire grow and spread much faster thus making it more difficult for fire fighters to extinguish. Clutter can also prevent or delay you from evacuating your home if an emergency does occur.

Another way to have a safer house is to eliminate lint build-up in clothes dryer vents and in the exhaust ducts. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that 15,500 fires associated with clothes dryers occur annually. These fires account for an average of 10 deaths, 310 injuries and more than \$84.4 million in property damage. To help prevent from becoming a statistic, follow these simple steps:

- Clean the lint screen/filter before or after drying each load of clothes. If clothing is still damp at the end of a typical drying cycle or drying requires longer times than normal, this may be a sign that the lint screen or the exhaust duct is blocked.
- Clean the dryer vent and exhaust duct periodically. Check the outside dryer vent while the dryer is operating to make sure exhaust air is escaping. If it is not, the vent or the exhaust duct may be blocked.
- Clean behind the dryer, where lint can build up. Have a qualified service person clean the interior of the dryer chassis periodically to minimize the amount of lint accumulation. Keep the area around the dryer clean and free of clutter.
- Replace plastic or foil, accordion-type ducting material with rigid or corrugated semi-rigid metal duct. Most manufacturers specify the use of a rigid or corrugated semi-rigid metal.

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Fire Extinguishers In The Home



Fire extinguishers are a common item found in businesses across America, but how common are they in the home? During a recent training class this question was posed to a room full of professionals with varying backgrounds, surprisingly only about ten percent of the students knew for certain if they had a working fire extinguisher in their home.

In addition to working smoke detectors, every family should have UL listed fire extinguishers strategically placed throughout their house. While there is no requirement for where these extinguishers should be placed the Fort Campbell Fire Department recommends placing one extinguisher on each floor of your home and two on the main floor. All too often home owners place one fire extinguisher under their kitchen sink and forget about it, this can prove detrimental since the number one place for fires to

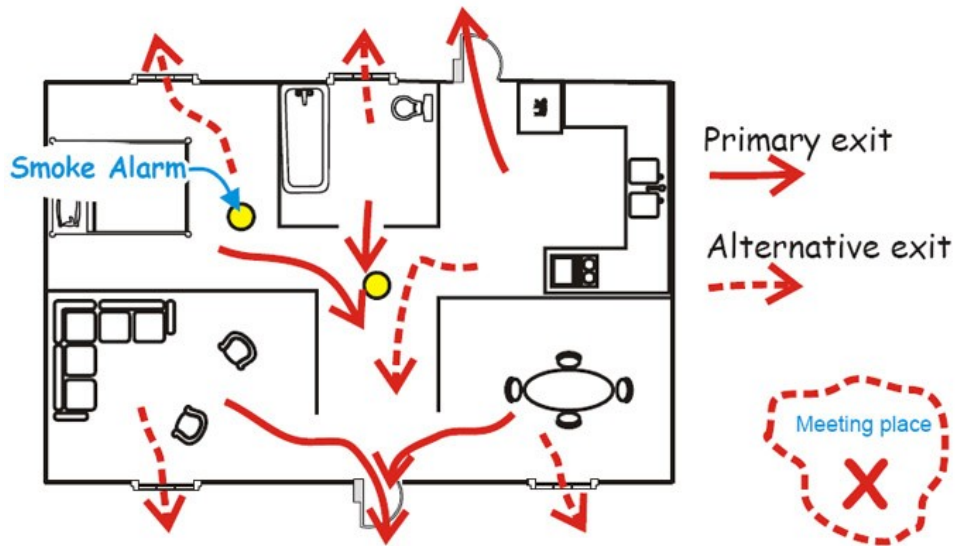
start in the home is in the kitchen. By placing one extinguisher in the kitchen, one in a hall closet or other central location and one on each floor you are giving yourself a better chance of finding an available fire extinguisher in the event of an emergency. Remember, fire extinguishers are your second line of defense behind a smoke detector and can be the difference between a small inconvenience and a life-changing event.

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Get Out and Stay Out!

Educating, preparing, and practicing fire safety with our children is crucial to everyone's safety. Children age five and under are twice as likely as the rest of the population to die in home fires. With spring time at our door step, developing and practicing your family's fire escape plan or E.D.I.T.H (Exit Drills in the Home) can save your child's life. It has been shown that only 23 percent of families in the United States have developed and practiced a fire escape plan to ensure their loved ones can escape in the event of a fire.

Families are urged to plan and practice two escape routes from each room of their home. Unfortunately thousands of children are injured or killed in home fires each year; however by creating a basic diagram of your home, marking all windows and doors, and planning two routes out of each room you can significantly reduce the chances of someone being left behind during a fire. Consider various fire scenarios, designate a safe meeting point outdoors and teach your children NEVER to go back inside the house.



Spring Cleaning With A Purpose continued from pg. 1

Spring is also a great time to change your batteries and test the smoke detectors in your home, ensure they are free of dust or anything else they may prevent them from working as designed. While you're testing your smoke alarms why not practice your home escape plan with your family to ensure everyone knows how to get out and where to meet in the event of a fire.

Remember, spring cleaning not only refreshes your residence; it can save your life. Below are a few more tips to help you clean your home this spring with a purpose!

Identify all hazards.

- Repair frayed or damaged appliance cords, wiring, fuses or breakers.
- Remove piles of rubbish, trash and yard debris.
- Remove stacks of paper and magazines; take them to recycling centers.
- Check for water leaks, especially near electrical appliances.
- Check for good clearance between heating appliances and combustibles.
- Cleanup work areas. Put dangerous tools, adhesives, matches or other work items away and out of any child's reach.

Properly store flammable items and home chemicals.

- Make sure gasoline and cleaning fluids are well marked and out of the reach of children and pets. Store them in a cool, dry place outside the house.
- Inventory all home and yard chemicals, paints and poisons. Store them according to their label. Properly dispose of any that are expired or leaking or that look bad but don't throw them in the trash or down the drain.
- Make sure all chemicals are kept under lock and key, and out of reach of children and pets.

Check fire protection and safety equipment.

- Check your smoke detector. Do it now while you're thinking about it. Change the batteries and dust off the outer shell of the detector.
- Check your home fire extinguisher for serviceability and placement (see pg. 1).
- Make sure all doors and windows open easily for fast escapes. Make sure your street numbers are posted properly and are visible on your home.
- Check and make sure you have a working flashlight and battery-powered radio for the approaching storm season.

Lasko Recalls Box Fan Due To Fire Hazard

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has announced a voluntary recall of the Lasko box fans. This product is manufactured in the United States and was sold to mass merchandisers nationwide from July 2002 through December 2005 for between \$12 and \$25.

The Lasko Company has received seven reports of fires associated with motor failures, including two house fires and one barn fire, resulting in extensive property damage. This recall involves over 4.8 million units with model numbers 3720, 3723 and 3733 and Galaxy box fans with model number 4733 that have date "2002-03" or "2003-04" stamped on the bottom of the metal frame. "Lasko" or "Galaxy" is printed on the front of the fan. The model number is either stamped or printed on the bottom of the fans. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled product and contact Lasko anytime to receive a free fused plug safety adapter.



For additional information, contact Lasko toll-free at (877) 445-1314, 7 days per week, or visit the firm's website at www.laskoproducts.com or CPSC at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prerel.html>

Backyard Safety

The weather is warming up, barbecue grills are being dusted off and the kids are playing in the backyard. Spring is a time full of changes, unfortunately it is also a time for home fires and personal injuries. Here are a few tips to help you stay safe this spring:

Keep grills at least 10 feet from any structure: Grilling mishaps cause more than 8,300 fires and send 3,000 people to the emergency room each year. Never grill indoors or near garages or porches, even if it's raining.

Have a spray bottle or fire extinguisher handy: An unexpected flare up can burn more than your burgers. Use a spray bottle to avoid flare ups and have a fire extinguisher nearby. Also, coals get hot – in some cases up to 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit – so dispose of charcoal away from kids and pets and cool it down with a hose.

Never use gasoline or kerosene to light a charcoal fire: Both can cause an explosion. When grilling, use insulated, flame-retardant mitts and long-handled barbecue tongs and utensils to handle food and coals.

Check gas grill hoses for cracking, brittleness, holes and leaks: If the tank valve or grill needs repair, do not attempt to do it yourself. Take it to your local home improvement store or qualified appliance repair person.

Inspect outdoor decorative lights carefully: Some families add backyard ambience with outdoor decorative lighting. Do not connect more than three light string sets together. Light strings with screw-in bulbs should have a maximum of 50 bulbs connected together. Be sure to use light strings bearing the UL Mark, which means UL has tested samples of the product for risk of fire, electric shock and other hazards.



Fire Extinguishers In The Home *continued from pg. 1*

So now that you know where to place your fire extinguishers in the home, what kind of fire extinguisher should you buy? The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) divides fire extinguishers in five separate categories or classes. Below is an explanation of those classes and the pictograph that will be placed on the fire extinguisher to show its type.

Types of Fire Extinguishers



Class A extinguishers put out fires in ordinary combustible materials such as cloth, wood, rubber, paper, and many plastics.



Class B extinguishers are used on fires involving flammable liquids, such as grease, gasoline, oil, and oil-based paints.



Class C extinguishers are suitable for use on fires involving appliances, tools, or other equipment that is electrically energized or plugged in.



Class D extinguishers are designed for use on flammable metals and are often specific for the type of metal in question. These are typically found only in factories working with these metals.



Class K fire extinguishers are intended for use on fires that involve vegetable oils, animal oils, or fats in cooking appliances. These extinguishers are generally found in commercial kitchens, such as those found in restaurants, cafeterias, and caterers. Class K extinguishers are now finding their way into the residential market for use in kitchens.



Now that you have an understanding of the different classes of fire extinguishers let's return to the original question "what kind of fire extinguisher should you buy"? As discussed earlier the number one location for fires in the home is the kitchen, usually due to unattended cooking. However, with the large amount of class A and class C materials found in today's home an ABC fire extinguisher is recommended for most residents. If you have a commercial kitchen or a large amount of combustible metals in your home, you may consider adding a class K or class D fire extinguisher.

Once you have selected the appropriate type and amount of fire extinguishers for your home it is important to plan ahead, read the instruction manual and know your extinguisher's capabilities before trying to fight a fire. Portable extinguishers are useful for putting out small fires, but understand your limits and the limits of the extinguisher. Below are some basic rules to keep in mind when dealing with household fire extinguishers:

- If a fire breaks out, your first step is to get everyone out of the house and call the fire department (911). If the fire is not spreading and is confined to a small area, use the appropriate type extinguisher for the fire. Know both yours and the fire extinguishers limits.
- Periodically inspect your extinguishers to determine if they need to be recharged or replaced. Extinguishers need to be recharged or replaced after each use. Also shaking the fire extinguisher periodically will ensure the agent is ready to be used, failing to keep agent loose could cause it to cake up and prevent the fire extinguisher from operating properly.

When using a portable extinguisher, keep your back to an unobstructed exit that is free from fire and NEVER turn your back to the fire. Check the manufacturer's instructions for operating guidelines, including proper distance between the extinguisher and fire. Always aim at the base of the fire and sweep side to side with a slow and steady pace.



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Fire extinguisher training is given every 1st Thursday of the month at the Education Center. Classroom location varies, see class roster at front entrance of Bldg. 202 for classroom number.

This newsletter is a tool of the Fort Campbell Fire Prevention office to share the fire safety message with as many people as possible. If you have unique fire safety related stories, personal experiences, or just want to share a fire safety tip please forward information to joe.baker@us.army.mil

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