**San Clemente Stake Emergency Preparedness**

March 26, 2015

***“FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY IN OUR HOMES”***

*(Note: this information is taken from internet resources and fire prevention handouts. Please verify any technical information with your local fire prevention authorities and specialists.)*

Did you know that if a fire starts in your home, you may have just two minutes to escape?

The most effective way to protect yourself and your home from fire is to identify and remove fire hazards and to be sure to have working smoke detectors in appropriate areas. 60% of house fire deaths occur in homes with no working smoke alarms. During a home fire, working smoke alarms and a fire escape plan that has been practiced regularly can save lives.

**PREVENTION**

Do a room to room inspection of your home - go from area to area and carefully observe any potential fire or safety hazards:

* **Kitchen**
	+ COOKING: Food should never be left cooking on the stove unattended; paper, cloth, plastic and other combustible items need to be away from the cooking area; cooking is often done with too high a flame; do not leave burners on under empty or near-empty pans; check electrical appliances for proper working order; don’t cook while wearing loose, flowing long-sleeved clothing; do not leave cooking grease, oil, or fat too close to the stove; do not place coffee pots, electrical skillets, etc., on counters in ways that allow children to grab hold of their cords and pull them down risking scalding burns; turn pot and pan handles turned inward; check for any odor of natural gas around gas appliances; children should not be permitted to play in kitchen while cooking is being done; do not use dish towels in place of potholders; keep a fire extinguisher or baking soda handy; remove greasy buildups from range and hood (clean or replace filter in fan)
	+ CLEANING MATERIALS, HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS: Cleaning supplies and household chemicals should not be stored haphazardly where they could easily spill, become broken, dampened, contaminated, mixed together, deteriorate, or get into the hands of small children.
* **Laundry/Utility Areas, Garages/Workshops**
	+ GARAGES AND WORKSHOPS: Keep a working fire extinguisher present in an easily accessible place; store gasoline, solvents, paints and thinners, etc., only in approved containers with lids on tightly, and away from any possible ignition sources such as water heater pilot lights, spark-producing equipment, etc. (preferable not stored in any structure attached to the house); water heater should be in an appropriate pan and not on floor; water heater must be strapped and/or otherwise secured in case of earthquake; never store more than one gallon of gasoline or use gasoline to clean auto parts or other things; check all cord connections and if frayed, dispose of them and replace; don’t use numerous extension cords; keep the workshop area completely free of dust, grease, sawdust and other combustible debris; dispose of any greasy or oily rags; spray painting should not be done in an enclosed area like the garage; check for any odor of gasoline or natural gas in the area; remove any accumulation of combustible storage such as boxes and cartons, old newspapers and magazines, etc.
	+ LAUNDRY/UTILITY AREAS: Dryer lint system needs to be frequently and properly cleaned; washer/dryer should not be jammed up against the wall without enough space for circulation, do not store laundry materials carelessly; be sure combustibles are not permitted too close to heat-generating parts/equipment; be sure all gas or electrical appliances are operating properly; water heater thermostat should never be set higher than 130 degrees; heater cabinet(s) are not to be used for storage of combustibles; store all household chemicals properly.
* **Bedrooms**
	+ SMOKERS: Some people smoke in their bedrooms, a practice that should be discouraged; ashtrays should be emptied daily, check for evidence of careless smoking (burn holes and ashes in carpeting, rugs, bedding, etc.); smoking materials should never be emptied into plastic or plastic-lined receptacles; matches and lighters should never be left lying around where little children could get to them.
	+ ELECTRICAL: Electrical items should be in good working order; frayed cords or cracked sockets need to be replaced; space heaters should not be placed too close to things that will burn (3 ft rule); electric blankets should be carefully folded and never wadded up and/or left on; bare light bulbs should not be too close to things that could catch fire (consider replacing with LEDs); light switch plates should never feel hot to the touch.
	+ FIRE SAFETY: Every second-floor bedroom needs an escape ladder handy; check windows and screens to make sure they can be opened quickly. If they have become stuck, they would have to be broken in order to escape wasting precious time; remove any bars on windows that cannot be easily opened from the inside and that prevent use of windows for possible escape.
* **Bathrooms**
	+ NEVER leave children unattended in the bath
	+ NEVER smoke while using aerosols or sprays
	+ Be careful with the use of electrical appliances around water
	+ Be sure all outlets are approved for use in bathrooms (GFI)
	+ NEVER leave curling irons on or within reach of small children
	+ Make sure things that will burn are NEVER crammed up against heaters
	+ Fall hazards need to be assessed and grab bars installed
* **Living/Family Rooms**
	+ Fireplace safety check done annually
	+ Clean chimneys professionally and annually
	+ Be sure screens or fireplace doors are installed
	+ Remove combustible materials a safe distance from fire,
	+ Be sure a fire retardant floor covering is in front of fireplace in event of sparks or embers escaping
	+ Never leave a burning fire unattended
	+ Check for gas odors near gas outlets
* **Other**
	+ Candle safety
		- **Always keep a burning candle within sight.** Extinguish all candles when leaving a room or before going to sleep. Be sure the wick ember is no longer glowing.
		- **Never burn a candle on or near anything that can catch fire.** Keep burning candles away from furniture, drapes, bedding, carpets, books, paper, flammable decorations, etc. Never place lit candles under a shelf or cupboard.
		- **Keep burning candles out of the reach of children and pets.**
		- **Trim candlewicks to ¼ inch each time before burning.** Long or crooked wicks can cause uneven burning and dripping.
		- **Always use a candle-holder specifically designed for candle use.** The holder should be heat resistant, sturdy, and large enough to contain any drips or melted wax.
		- **Be sure the candle-holder is placed on a stable, heat-resistant surface.** This can help prevent heat damage to underlying surfaces and prevent glass containers from breaking.
		- **Keep the wax pool free of wick trimmings, matches and debris at all times.**
		- **Always read and follow the manufacturer’s use and safety instructions carefully.** Don’t burn a candle longer than the manufacturer recommends.
		- Suggest using battery operated candles to replace open flame candles.
	+ Christmas Tree Safety

 **Selecting the tree**

* If you have an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled, certified, or identified by the manufacturer as fire retardant and all electrical connections are safe
* Choose a real tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.

**Placing the tree**

* Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 1" - 2" from the base of the trunk.
* Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
* Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
* Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.

**Lighting the tree**

* Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
* Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs. Read manufacturer’s instructions for number of LED strands to connect.
* Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
* Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

**After Christmas**

* Get rid of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home. Check with your local community to find a recycling program. Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.
	+ SMOKE ALARM(S): Smoke alarms should be tested and dusted monthly; batteries replaced at least annually (whether they need it or not!); if the main smoke alarm is electric, there must be battery-powered backup; household fire drills should be conducted twice a year (may coincide with a smoke alarm test); be sure smoke alarm batteries are not dead or missing; there should be a smoke alarm in the hallway outside each bedroom area; all persons in household and baby sitters, etc., should learn the distinct sounds made by smoke alarm(s) and what they mean; take the time to go over household fire escape plan with overnight visitors; hallway or window exit should never be partially blocked by furniture, storage or other items.
	+ FIRE EXTINGUISHERS: One ABC for every level of home and one in garage, near an exit located where any family member can access. Check or replace annually. Learn and teach everyone how to use. Always allow yourself an escape route if using an extinguisher in case fire spreads (keep your back to the door)
	+ A carbon monoxide detector or CO detector is a device that detects the presence of carbon monoxide (CO) and prevents carbon monoxide poisoning. Dangerous CO buildup in the home, can be caused by open flames, space heaters, water heaters, blocked chimneys or by running a car inside a garage. It is often referred to as the "silent killer" because it is virtually undetectable without using detection technology and most people do not realize they are being poisoned.
* **Patio and Yard**
	+ Remove accumulations of dry grass, weeds, debris, and rubbish in front, back, and/or side yards
	+ propane containers need to be properly stored and/or maintained
	+ fireplace chimney needs spark arrester
	+ wood fencing maintained in good repair
	+ check fireplace for loosened bricks or bricks missing
	+ check for any strong odor of gas around the barbecue;
	+ remove greasy deposits from barbecue grill
	+ store charcoal and any liquid fire starters properly
	+ BBQ grill should never be too close to structures.
* **Pools (accidental drowning is the #1 cause of death of children age 1-5 !!)**
	+ Is there climb-proof fencing at least 4 feet (1.2 meters) high on all sides of the pool? Does the fence have a self-closing gate with a childproof lock?
	+ Have all ladders been removed from an above-ground pool when not in use?
	+ Have you and family members taken CPR classes?
	+ Instruct babysitters in pool safety - better yet, restrict them completely from using the pool in your absence. Teach them about the alarms and what they sound like.
	+ Do all doors leading to pool area have locks and open alarms if small children reside in or visit the home?
	+ Does the pool have an alarm?
	+ Are there flotation devices close by? (lifesaver ring on a rope)
	+ Don’t run in slippery area of pool deck
	+ **Always** assign a responsible adult who knows how to swim and rescue to supervise a pool when in use - not on cell phone or reading, etc., but constantly watching children. Children drown silently!

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# **WILD FIRES**

# Before a Wildfire

# Know your risk. Do some research and learn how often wildfires occur in your area. Find out when there is the greatest risk and take wildfire safety precautions.

# Evaluate your surroundings. If you're in an area with a high risk for fire, examine the landscaping around your house. Move plants or trees that are too close to your house or burn easily.

# Clear dead plants away from your house. Dead grass and plants are easily flammable and should be cleared at least 50 feet away from your house.

# Install smoke alarms in your house. Make sure you test the alarms periodically to ensure they are working properly.

# Put together an emergency kit that you can easily grab in event you need to evacuate quickly. Your kit should include water, food, first aid supplies, cash in small bills, light sources, radio, blankets and any personal items you may need (medications, toiletries, clothing and appropriate items for all ages - diapers and formula for babies, change of underwear, etc.). If you have pets, make sure they also have adequate supplies.

# Decide in advance what you will take with you. Keep personal belongings to a minimum and only take what you absolutely must have. If you have to leave immediately for safety reasons leave everything behind except your 72-hour kits.

# Create an emergency plan. Planning in advance how you will protect your house and how you will evacuate if necessary can help minimize injury and damages. Choose a meeting place away from your home for family members to gather in case you are not together when a fire happens. Designate a neighbor to evacuate your pets in case you are not able to get home during a fire.

# If a Wildfire Is Approaching

# Prepare to evacuate. Listen to emergency channels and know the status of the fire. Put emergency supplies and must-have items in the car so you can evacuate quickly. Evacuate immediately if told to do so.

# Protect your property. If you have time, use a hose to wet down your house, the roof and the surrounding area. Turn off the gas in the house.

# **HOME FIRES**

Each year more than 2,500 people die and 12,600 are injured in home fires in the United States, with direct property loss due to home fires estimated at $7.3 billion annually. Home fires can be prevented!

To protect yourself, it is important to understand the basic characteristics of fire. Fire spreads quickly; there is no time to gather valuables or make a phone call. In just two minutes, a fire can become life-threatening. In five minutes, a residence can be completely engulfed in flames.

Heat and smoke from fire can be more dangerous than the flames. Inhaling the super-hot air can sear your lungs. Fire produces poisonous gases that make you disoriented and drowsy. Instead of being awakened by a fire, you may fall into a deeper sleep. Asphyxiation is the leading cause of fire deaths, exceeding burns by a three-to-one ratio.

Every day Americans experience the horror of fire but most people don't understand fire.

**Fire is FAST!**

There is little time! In less than 30 seconds a small flame can get completely out of control and turn into a major fire. It only takes minutes for thick black smoke to fill a house or for it to be engulfed in flames. Most deadly fires occur in the home when people are asleep. If you wake up to a fire, you won't have time to grab valuables because fire spreads too quickly and the smoke is too thick. There is only time to escape.

**Fire is HOT!**

Heat is more threatening than flames. A fire's heat alone can kill. Room temperatures in a fire can be 100 degrees at floor level and rise to 600 degrees at eye level. Inhaling this super-hot air will scorch your lungs. This heat can melt clothes to your skin. In five minutes, a room can get so hot that everything in it ignites at once: this is called flashover.

**Fire is DARK!**

Fire isn't bright, it's pitch black. Fire starts bright, but quickly produces black smoke and complete darkness. If you wake up to a fire you may be blinded, disoriented and unable to find your way around the home you've lived in for years.

**Fire is DEADLY!**

Smoke and toxic gases kill more people than flames do. Fire uses up the oxygen you need and produces smoke and poisonous gases that kill. Breathing even small amounts of smoke and toxic gases can make you drowsy, disoriented and short of breath. The odorless, colorless fumes can lull you into a deep sleep before the flames reach your door. You may not wake up in time to escape.

**If a fire occurs in your home, GET OUT, STAY OUT and CALL 9-1-1 for help.**

Only when we know the true nature of fire can we prepare our families and ourselves.

Good Rules to follow: Every 6 months: Change Your Clock, Test Your Alarms, Practice Your Home Fire Drill, **When Alarm Goes Off You Get Out!**

## Help Me Plan My Home Fire Drill

### Everyone in your household should take part in planning your escape.

* Think about how you will escape from every room, [starting with bedrooms](http://www.homefiredrill.org/?p=bedroom-escape).
* If possible, plan two escape routes from each room. Your second route may be to go out a window, or stand at a window where firefighters can see you.
* Decide where you will [meet outside](http://www.homefiredrill.org/?p=meeting-place).
* Plan everyone’s role. Who will make sure children get out? Plan for special needs. Do you have: [Young children?](http://www.homefiredrill.org/?p=children-escape) [Older adults?](http://www.homefiredrill.org/?p=older-escape) People with temporary or permanent disabilities? Do you ever have overnight [guests](http://www.homefiredrill.org/?p=guests-escape)? Pets?
* Share your plan with babysitters and frequent visitors.
* Keep your floors, hallways and stairs clear of [clutter](http://www.homefiredrill.org/?p=clutter-hazard).
* [Fire extinguishers](http://www.homefiredrill.org/?p=fire-extinguishers) require planning too.
* [Practice your home fire drill.](http://www.homefiredrill.org/?p=practice-home-fire-drill)

**UNDERSTANDING A FIRE EVENT**

The **fire triangle** or **combustion triangle** is a simple model for understanding the necessary ingredients for most [fires](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fire).The triangle illustrates the three elements a fire needs to ignite: [heat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heat), [fuel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuel), and an [oxidizing agent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxidizing_agent) (usually [oxygen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxygen)). A fire naturally occurs when the elements are present and combined in the right mixture,meaning that fire is actually an event rather than a "thing". A fire can be prevented or extinguished by removing any one of the elements in the fire triangle. For example, covering a fire with a [fire blanket](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fire_blanket) or lid to a pan on the stove removes the "oxygen" part of the triangle and can extinguish a fire.



## Extinction of the fire

To stop a combustion reaction, one of the three elements of the fire-triangle has to be removed.

**Without sufficient heat,** a fire cannot begin, and it cannot continue. Heat can be removed by the application of a substance which reduces the amount of heat available to the fire reaction. This is often water, which requires heat for phase change from water to steam. Fire departments use water because it’s readily available and it removes the heat.

**Without fuel,** a fire will stop. Fuel can be removed naturally, as where the fire has consumed all the burnable fuel, or manually, by mechanically or chemically removing the fuel from the fire. Fuel separation is an important factor in [wildland fire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildfire) suppression, and is the basis for most major tactics, such as [controlled burns](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Controlled_burn). The fire stops because a lower concentration of fuel vapor in the flame leads to a decrease in energy release and a lower temperature. Removing the fuel thereby decreases the heat.

**Without sufficient oxygen,** a fire cannot begin, and it cannot continue. With a decreased oxygen concentration, the combustion process slows. Oxygen can be denied to a fire using a carbon dioxide [fire extinguisher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fire_extinguisher), a [fire blanket](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fire_blanket) or water.

**USING A FIRE EXTINGUISHER**

A typical fire extinguisher contains only 10 seconds of extinguishing power. This could be less if it has already been partially discharged. Always read the instructions that come with the fire extinguisher beforehand and become familiarized with its parts. It is highly recommended by fire prevention experts that you get hands-on training before operating a fire extinguisher. Most local fire departments offer this service.

Once the fire is out, don't walk away! Watch the area for a few minutes in case it re-ignites. Recharge or replace the extinguisher immediately after use. It is recommended that you replace your ABC extinguisher every year. Don’t waste it though, use it for family fire prevention practice to give everyone a hands on experience. (It can leave a white residue, so best to spray into an area outside and away from cars and household items, perhaps into a large trash bag.)

**It is vital to know what type of extinguisher you are using. Using the wrong type of extinguisher for the wrong type of fire can be life-threatening.**

Choose an What **What do the A B C ratings mean on Fire Extinguishers?**

**Fire Extinguisher Ratings**

Fire extinguishers are classified by fire type. The A, B, C rating system defines the kinds of burning materials each fire extinguisher is designed to fight. The number in front of the A, B, or C indicates the rating size of fire the unit can extinguish.

ABC Fire Extinguishers are very versatile. They are often the ideal choice being that they are able to put out many different types of fires. They use monoammonium phosphate which is a dry chemical that is able to quickly put out the fire. It is a pale yellow powder that is able to put out all three classes of fire; Class A for trash, wood and paper, Class B for liquids and gases, and Class C for energized electrical sources. The dry chemical smothers the fire. It can leave a residue once the fire has been put out so keep this in mind when choosing this type of extinguisher.Most fire extinguishers used in the home are classified as A.B.C

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