

# Safety Fact Sheet



The Utah Safety Council cares about your safety outside of the work setting. We offer resources that keep you and your loved ones safe at home, at play and on the go.

## HOME APPLIANCE SAFETY

Training yourself and other family members in proper ways to operate appliances around your home is the best way to extend the life of these units as well as protect your safety.

### Furnaces

Improperly maintained furnaces present fire and carbon dioxide (CO) hazards. To keep your furnace running at optimum capacity:

- Have your furnace professionally cleaned and serviced each autumn.
- Clean the air filter monthly.
- Check periodically to make sure the flame burns blue and steady, and never burns outside of the furnace housing.
- If you detect a natural gas leak, evacuate everyone from the home and call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Install a smoke alarm and CO detector on every floor of your house to provide early warning of potential dangers.

### Fireplaces/Chimneys

- Have your chimney inspected, cleaned and serviced annually by a professional chimney sweep.
- Problems to look for include:
  - Cracks
  - Obstructions
  - Creosote buildup (highly flammable)
- Make sure the damper is open before you begin burning.
- Never burn trash or green wood in your fireplace because it causes excessive creosote buildup.
- Always clean out ashes and debris from the last fire before you burn again.
- Always use an appropriately sized fireplace screen to catch sparks and prevent falling logs from rolling out and starting a fire.
- Keep combustible items well away from the flames.

### Clothes Dryers

According to the U.S. Consumer Safety Commission, 2,900 clothes dryer fires are reported each year and cause an estimated 5 deaths, 100 injuries, and \$35 million in property loss. Many of these fires could have been prevented by following basic home appliance safety training practices:

- Be sure to clean the lint filter after every load. Always check the back of the dryer for additional trapped lint.
- Clean out the dryer vent as well to reduce the hazard of a fire, increase air flow and reduce drying time.
- Have your dryer cleaned and serviced periodically by a qualified appliance maintenance professional.
- Use only fire-proof metal exhaust hoses and vents.
- Never dry fabrics that have been exposed to flammable materials such as gasoline, solvents and oils.

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- Read the manufacturer's manual and only use your dryer in accordance with the recommended guidelines.
- Heed all warning labels on the machine.

## Oven Ranges

Many common household accidents happen when operating the family oven. To reduce risk of danger:

- Keep burners, stove top and oven clean and free of grease and other flammable debris.
- Never leave flammable items such as hot pads or towels near burners.
- Never leave food cooking unattended.
- Never spray aerosols such as non-stick products and air fresheners near flames.
- Always turn pot handles inward to avoid the possibility of knocking a pot off the stove.
- Never wear clothing with long, loose sleeves while cooking.
- Periodically inspect electrical cords and gas connections for wear and damage.

## Microwave Ovens

Microwave ovens can present some of the same dangers as traditional ovens, plus a few additional risks. Be sure to:

- Never operate a unit with a door that is bent, warped or otherwise damaged in a way that prevents it from closing firmly.
- Never operate an empty oven.
- Avoid standing directly in front of a microwave while it is in operation.
- Avoid overheating liquids or they may super-heat and erupt, causing severe burns.
- Never use metal pans and utensils in the unit, or arcing will occur.
- Keep the inside of the oven, the door and all seals clean and free of debris.

## Space Heaters

When used in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines, space heaters can be an excellent secondary heat source in areas where extra warmth is required. However, there is a danger of starting a fire when these appliances are placed in inappropriate areas and left unattended.

- When selecting a heater, look for one that has been tested and certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory.
- Always read the operating manual before you use the appliance.
- Do not operate a space heater if it is damaged.
- Check the power cording for fraying, kinks and cuts before turning a space heater on. Do not place cording under carpeting in order to keep it from being damaged.
- Avoid placing the heater near water, or you run the risk of electrocution.
- Place a space heater on a flat, noncombustible surface.
- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from anything flammable or combustible (i.e., gasoline, curtains, rugs, furniture, newspaper, blankets or clothing).
- Do not operate a space heater in walkways and exits where they can be tripped on, burn a passersby or start a fire if tipped over.
- Only purchase and operate units that feature heat element guards and automatic cut off switches.
- Do not use an extension cord with your space heater.
- Do not leave an operating space heater unattended. Turn it off and unplug it when you leave the room or go to sleep.

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- Teach children how to behave safely around the heating unit.
- Do not leave children or pets alone with an operating space heater.

## **Garage Doors**

There is great potential for adults and children to become trapped, injured and even killed beneath automatically operated garage doors. Reduce the risk of accidents by:

- Thoroughly reading and understanding the operation manual before you install and use your unit.
- Keep the remote out of the reach of children.
- Keep your eyes on the door until it is completely closed.
- Never try to duck under a moving door.
- Test the automatic reverse mechanism on the unit once a month.
- Have a qualified maintenance technician inspect and perform any needed repairs on a bi-annual basis.
- Consider Investing in safety with a new door and opener that offers automatic reversal sensors to prevent crushing injuries or deaths.