

The 5 Main Causes of Domestic Fires – and How to Prevent Them

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Fire is rightly feared as one of the most devastating and potentially tragic incidents that can [happen in the home](#). But fortunately the most common [causes of fire](#), such as those listed below, can ***usually be avoided by taking some simple precautions.***

1. Stoves

Kitchen fires started during cooking are the ***most common*** type of domestic fire in the United States.

A typical cause is the overheating of an ***unattended pan***. The spattering of oil or fat which often follows may quickly cause nearby combustible materials to catch fire. ***Such items as paper towels, cloths and oven gloves should therefore be kept well away from the stove top.***

If a pan fire should occur the ***safest way to tackle it is to cover the flames with a lid***. If the fire is in the oven itself, ***closing the door and turning off the power*** should quickly extinguish the flames.

Never try to douse a kitchen fire with water as this will only intensify the blaze.

2. Electrical Appliances & Wiring

Electrical sockets, switches, cords and appliances are another major source of fire risk.

Sockets and switches should be regularly checked for ***loose or frayed wires***, as should appliance cords. Heat from

improperly insulated cords may cause fires, so these should never be routed under carpets or rugs, or where they may be pressed on by furniture.

Powering too many appliances from a single socket or extension lead may also be dangerous, particularly if the general wiring in the building is old or substandard. Warning signs of this include the **frequent tripping of circuit breakers and fuses** when appliances are switched on.

-Electrical Dryers

Electric clothes dryers can be a serious fire risk if the air vent is not cleaned regularly. **The resulting accumulation of lint and other debris can easily catch fire** when exposed to the high temperatures typically generated by these kind of appliances.

-Light and Lamp Fittings

As innocuous as they may seem, lamps and lighting installations are a major cause of domestic fires.

Apart from loose or frayed cords and faulty switches, the use of **bulbs with a wattage in excess of that recommended** for a particular lamp or fitting is also a significant fire hazard.

Leaving paper or any other inflammable material too close to a hot bulb is another risk that should be avoided.

-Portable Room Heaters

Even if they are functioning correctly with a safe cord, these kind of heaters, also called space heaters, pose a considerable risk of fire if placed too close to inflammable items such as bedding materials, clothes, towels, curtains and furnishings. For this reason, **portable heaters should never be used to dry clothes or other fabrics**.

3. Home Furnaces

Whether gas or electric, malfunctioning or improperly installed furnaces are a common cause of fire. They should be inspected at least annually by a qualified person, and particular attention should be paid between inspections to ensuring that **ventilation is unobstructed and chimneys are clean**.

4. Cigarettes, Pipes and Cigars

Despite being far less common than it used to be, smoking remains a surprisingly frequent cause of household fires.

Falling asleep with a lit cigarette or cigar is an obvious risk, but it's also important to ensure that ashtrays are of adequate size and that their contents are **completely extinguished** before emptying them. Furniture and carpets should always be checked before retiring at night because **a cigarette end may smolder for a considerable time before igniting a fire**.

5. Candles

Apart from ensuring that they are completely extinguished before leaving a room, it is important that candles are **not placed close to any flammable materials** such as paper or curtains, and that they are **positioned on a flat, stable surface out of the reach of children and pets**.

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These simple steps should go a long way towards ensuring that you never suffer the trauma of a fire in your home.

But if the worst should occur, you'll need expert help to [mitigate and repair the damage](#) caused by [smoke, flame and soot](#).

At [Utah Flood Cleanup](#), our [fire restoration experts](#) have been assisting homeowners since 1992, and you can [contact us here](#) when you need us – 24/7. Give us a call at **801-416-2666** for your fire damage restoration service needs.

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