

If You Smoke, Put It Out. All the Way. Every Time.

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On Sunday March 16, 1969 The Minneapolis Tribune wrote, “Careless Smoking Leading Home-Fire Cause”. In 2008, has much changed? Actually it has, but not enough. Smoking is no longer the leading cause of home fires, but it is still the leading cause of fire related deaths in the world. The United States Fire Administration (USFA) and the Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View Fire Department are working hard to help prevent home fire deaths and injuries caused by smoking materials. Through this national fire safety campaign, the USFA is urging smokers to “**Put It Out. All the Way. Every Time**”.

It starts with understanding it can happen to you. Every year, men, women and children are killed in home fires caused by cigarettes and other smoking materials. Most victims of smoking-related fires never thought it could happen to them. These fires can affect not only the smoker, but others living in or next to the home at the time of the fire.

Smoking and Home Fires Action Steps

- *If You Smoke, Smoke Outside*- Most home fires caused by smoking materials start inside the home. It’s better to smoke outside.
- *Wherever You Smoke, Use Deep Sturdy Ashtrays*- Use ashtrays with a wide, stable base that is hard to tip over. If it wobbles, it won’t work. Ashtrays should be set on something sturdy and hard to ignite, like a table. If you smoke outside, put your cigarettes out in a can filled with sand or water.
- *Make Sure Cigarettes and Ashes are Out*- **Put It Out. All the Way. Every Time.** The cigarette really needs to be completely stubbed out in the ashtray. Soak cigarette butts and ashes in water before throwing them away. **Never** toss hot cigarette butts or ashes in the trash.
- *Check for Butts*- Chairs and sofas catch on fire fast and burn fast. Don’t put ashtrays on them. If people have been smoking in the home, check for cigarettes under cushions.
- *Never Smoke in a Home Where Oxygen is Used*- Never smoke while using oxygen or area anywhere near an oxygen source, even if it is turned off. Oxygen can be explosive and makes fire burn hotter and faster.
- *If You Smoke, Fire-Safe Cigarettes are Better*- Fire-safe cigarettes are less likely to cause fires. These cigarettes have banded paper that can slow the burn of a cigarette that isn’t being used.
- *Be Alert*- To prevent a deadly fire, you have to be alert. If you are sleepy, have been drinking, or have taken medicine that makes you drowsy, put your cigarette out first. Smoking in bed is just plain **wrong**.

General Fire Safety Facts

- Place properly installed and maintained smoke alarms in your bedrooms, outside the bedrooms and on every level of the home. Exchange them for new ones every 10 years.
- Change the batteries when you change your clocks.

- Create an escape plan today! Plan two ways to escape from each room. Practice the escape plan with everyone in the home. Agree on one family meeting place; one where you all can be seen.
- Consider installing residential fire sprinklers.
- Call the Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View Fire Department for your *free* Home Safety Survey @ 763-767-4003.

Practice these tips to help prevent your dreams from going up in smoke.