

## **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

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In the month of February, the communities of DeKalb and Sycamore have seen four civilian casualties resulting from fires in residential homes. Most burn injuries and fatalities can be avoided with simple lifestyle modifications and fire safety awareness. The DeKalb Fire Department urge residents to look around their homes to identify hazards and make appropriate changes. The best way to prevent injury and death from fire is to prevent fires from happening in the first place. Easy steps that everyone can take to prevent fires in the home are:

- **Heating Appliances:** Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet from any heat source like fireplaces, wood stoves, or space heaters.
- **Smoking:** People who smoke should smoke outside when possible; use deep, sturdy ashtrays; put water on cigarette butts before throwing them away; and only smoke when alert, never in bed or when sleepy.
- **Candles:** Place candles in a sturdy holder and at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn; make sure candles cannot be reached by children or pets; and blow out all candles if you leave the room, get sleepy, or go to bed.
- **Cooking:** Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking food; if you leave the kitchen, turn the burner off; keep items that can burn away from the cooking area; and turn pot handles toward the back of the stove so they won't get bumped or pulled down by children.
- **Electrical:** Plug only one heat-producing appliance into the electrical outlet. Never use an extension cord. Examples of heat-producing appliances are microwaves, coffee maker, and portable heater; any extension cord is meant for temporary use only; and if you have an electrical cord that is frayed or broken, do not use it.

### Ways to Protect You and Your Family from Fire

- **Smoke Alarms:** Put working smoke alarms on every level of your home and inside and outside sleeping areas; push the button on the smoke alarm every month to make sure it is working; replace batteries every six months; and replace smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old.
- **Fire Escape Plan:** Create and practice your home fire escape plan at least twice a year with your family.
- **Matches & Lighters:** Keep matches and lighters in a high place. Never leave them where they can be reached by children.

- **Fire Extinguishers:** Keep a home fire extinguisher in an easily accessible area; keep near an exit in case you need to rapidly evacuate; and inspect the extinguisher monthly and shake it to loosen the agent inside.

With questions, contact the DeKalb Fire Department at 815-748-8460 or see the weblinks below for additional information and fire safety games and activities for children.

- DeKalb Fire Department web page: <https://www.cityofdekalb.com/163/Safety-Tips>
- U.S. Fire Administration: <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/>
- National Fire Protection Association: <http://www.sparky.org/>

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