

1. **Never smoke in bed** Never smoke if there is an oxygen tank nearby. Instead, smoke outside to fully eliminate the risk of fire. Regardless, make sure you use deep and heavy ashtrays to avoid them from flipping or falling off a table by accident. Moreover, when putting out your cigarette, use water or sand to help snuff out any embers.

2. **Space Heaters Need Space** Make sure space heaters are not too close to drapes, bedding, sofas or your clothing. Your space heater should be at least 3 feet away from everything. Shut off AND unplug your space heater when you leave your home and go to bed. Never plug your space heater into an extension cord or power strip, plug them directly into the wall.

3. **Cook with Care** Food on the stove fires are common in San Antonio. Most cooking fires happen when you fry food. If a pan or pot of food catches fire, keep a lid nearby and cover the pan. Wear short, rolled-up or fitted sleeves when cooking so they don't catch fire accidentally. Don't leave the room when food is being cooked on the stove. Move things that can burn away from the stove.

4. **Smoke Alarms** Did you know the chance of surviving a home fire almost doubles with the use of a smoke alarm? You should get a smoke alarm for every room, outside each bedroom and on every level of your home. If you can get a connected smoke alarm system so that if one goes off, they all go off. You should also test your smoke alarms every month (simply press the test button). If hearing the alarm is a problem, you can get a strobe alarm or one that shakes your bed in the event it goes off.

5. **Get Fireplace & Wood Stoves Inspected Annually** Your fireplace or wood stove may need a cleaning. Too much soot in your chimney can cause a fire. Cracks in chimney bricks and rusting in stovepipes can also cause a fire. Avoid burning green wood, garbage or cardboard boxes in your fireplace, as they increase dangerous soot buildup in your chimney.

6. **Make a Getaway Plan** If there is a fire that's too hard to control, get out. Create a fire escape plan and familiarize yourself with it. You should know the exits from your house or apartment, as well as how to get out of your building. Make sure your designated escape door can be easily opened when rushed and visibility is poor. If you have difficulty maneuvering quickly or without help, consider getting one of the many dependable and reputable medical alert systems. If you have an emergency, simply press the button and agents will send help right away.

8. **Avoid Candles** Scented candles have grown in popularity, they smell delicious and they can create a calm and soothing environment. Avoid any open flames in your home to the extent possible. Consider electric scented candles or electric candles as a safer alternative to the real thing.

9. **Keep Fire Extinguishers Nearby** You should have at least one fire extinguisher near every fire hazard, whether it be the kitchen, the fireplace, wood stove or your furnace room. Make sure your fire extinguishers are full and operational. Also, don't place the extinguishers too close to the hazard. For example, place an extinguisher in the kitchen, but far away from the stove, that way if your stovetop does catch fire, you'll be able to get the extinguisher without burning yourself.