

G. Emergency and Safety Skills

Intermediate

Understands basic fire prevention (no smoking in bed, using gas stove to heat house, excessive use of extension cords, frayed electrical cords, etc.)	E-1
Knows how to use a fire extinguisher	E-4; demonstration with actual extinguisher
Knows that improperly used appliances can cause fires or electrocution	E-5
Knows how to recognize the smell of a gas leak and knows what to do/whom to call if they smell gas	E-6
Knows how to identify at least three precautions for protecting oneself at home and in the community (street safety, victimization, hazardous situations, crossing traffic, etc.)	E-7, 8 E-9, 10

Independent Living Skills Module II

FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

Did you know that most fatal fires occur when people are sleeping, usually between Midnight and 6 a.m.?

It's true! This is one reason why it's so important to have smoke detectors/alarms in your home or apartment. They will wake you when there is a fire, giving you time to escape. People who don't have smoke detectors may not wake up in time to escape the killing heat, smoke, and flames of a house fire.

More Fire Safety Information Follows:

- Most fire deaths occur from smoke rather than burns. As a house fire burns, it gives off toxic gases, often carbon monoxide, which can kill.
- Smoke detectors are, therefore, one of the most important life saving devices you can own. Every home/apartment should have at least one smoke detector. Under Massachusetts law, landlords must provide smoke detectors in a building with three or more apartments. In some cities, such as Boston, all homes and apartments must have smoke detectors.
- Fire extinguishers can be used to put out small fires and can help clear an escape route. Don't waste time trying to put out a house fire, however; that's the fireman's job. Your job is to escape.
- Multi-purpose fire extinguishers are important household safety devices. The extinguishers labeled "ABC" are the best ones to buy; they can put out most fire -- wood, paper, cloth, flammable liquids, and electrical wires/appliances.
- Don't use water on a grease fire. Instead use baking soda, a fire extinguisher, sand, etc.
- If your bedroom is above the first floor and you don't have a fire escape stairway outside one of your bedroom windows, you should have a fire escape ladder. Should the stairway ever be blocked by fire, you'll have an escape route from the window. Fire escape ladders are collapsible and can be stored in a closet or under the bed.
- You should always sleep with your bedroom door closed. Should a fire occur, the closed door will temporarily hold back the heat and the smoke.
- Plan your fire escape route and have practice fire drills regularly.

What would you do first if you woke up at night and discovered there was a fire in your home and the smoke alarms were blaring?

Fire Extinguisher Operation

If you attempt to fight the fire, remember the acronym P.A.S.S.

Pull the Pin

A small pin inserted through the handle of the fire extinguisher prevents accidental discharge. It is held in place by a thin plastic strap which will break easily when the pin is pulled or twisted.

Aim the Extinguisher

Point or aim the extinguisher at the base or front edge of the fire.

Squeeze the Handle

Squeeze the handle to discharge the fire extinguisher.

Sweep from Side to Side

Keep the extinguisher aimed at the base of the fire and sweep side to side, pushing the fire away from you.



Safety Precautions

Keep in mind the following safety precautions if attempting to extinguish a fire:

- Be sure you have the correct fire extinguisher for the type of fire and know how to use it.
- In commercial kitchens with built-in fire protection systems, the system should be activated before attempting to use a portable fire extinguisher.
- Maintain your exit. Leave yourself a way-out in case the fire gets out of control.
- Have a back-up person standing by whenever possible in case assistance is needed.
- Stop and leave the area immediately if you experience any physical problems such as dizziness or difficulty breathing.
- Even if you think a fire is out, call the fire department to inspect the area. A fire may reignite or may still be smoldering where it cannot be seen.
- If a fire extinguisher has been used and is rechargeable, have it serviced before returning it to original location.



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Santa Clara County Fire Department

A California Fire Protection District serving
Santa Clara County and the communities of Campbell, Cupertino,
Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, and Saratoga

408.378.4010

E-4

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Electrical Fire Safety

A Fact sheet on Home Electrical Fire Prevention

Electrical fires in our homes claim the lives of 310 Americans each year and injure 1,100 more. Some of these fires are caused by electrical system failures, but many more are caused by incorrectly installed wiring and overloaded circuits and extension cords.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) would like consumers to know that there are simple steps you can take to prevent the loss of life and property resulting from electrical fires.

The Problem

During a typical year, home electrical problems account for 28,600 fires and \$1.1 billion in property losses. 53% of residential electrical fires involve electrical wiring.

December and January are the most dangerous months for electrical fires. Fire deaths are highest in winter months which call for more indoor activities and increases in lighting, heating, and appliance use. The bedroom is the leading area of fire origin for residential building electrical fires. However, electrical fires that begin in the living room/family room/den areas result in the most deaths.

The Cause



- Most electrical distribution fires result from problems with "fixed wiring" such as faulty electrical outlets and old wiring. Problems with cords (such as extension and appliance cords), plugs, receptacles, and switches also cause many home electrical fires.
- Light fixtures and lamps/light bulbs are also leading causes of electrical fires.
- Many avoidable electrical fires can be traced to misuse of electric cords, such as overloading circuits, poor maintenance, and running the cords under rugs or in high traffic areas.

Safety Precautions

- Routinely check your electrical appliances and wiring.
- Frayed wires can cause fires. Replace all worn, old or damaged appliance cords immediately.
- Replace any electrical tool if it causes even small electrical shocks, overheats, shorts out, or gives off smoke or sparks.
- Keep electrical appliances away from wet floors and counters; pay special care to electrical appliances in the bathroom and kitchen.
- Buy electrical products evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Keep clothes, curtains, and other potentially combustible items at least three feet from all heaters.
- If an appliance has a three-prong plug, use it only in a three-slot outlet. Never force it to fit into a two-slot outlet or extension cord.
- Don't allow children to play with or around electrical appliances like space heaters, irons, and hair dryers.
- Use safety closures to "child-proof" electrical outlets.
- Use electrical extension cords wisely; never overload extension cords or wall sockets.
- Immediately shut off, then professionally replace, light switches that are hot to the touch and lights that flicker.

Finally, having a working smoke alarm dramatically increases your chances of surviving a fire. And remember to practice a home escape plan frequently with your family.

What to Do/Not Do in case of a gas leak

Next to each statement put the symbol  if you think that is a step you should follow if you suspect a gas leak or a  if you think that it is a step you should not follow if you suspect a gas leak.

Leave the area at once

Light matches or smoke

Use any electrical device including appliances, doorbells and garage door openers

Turn light switches on and off

Go to a location outside the home or building where you can no longer smell gas.

Use any phones, including cell phones

Call Southern Connecticut Gas immediately

Try to locate the source of the gas leak

Re-enter the home or building

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PREVENTING CRIME AT HOME

Did you know that approximately 50% of burglars get into homes through unlocked doors and windows? It may seem hard to believe, but it's true.



ACTIVITY

How well do you protect yourself from crime in your home? Answer the questions below to find out.

1. When someone rings your doorbell or knocks on the door, do you ever open the door without knowing who is out there?

2. Do you ever hide your house keys under the doormat? In the mailbox? On top of the door frame?

3. Have you ever given your key ring with all your keys to a mechanic or parking lot attendant?

4. Have you ever received a "wrong number" telephone call and told the caller your telephone number?

5. Have you ever left your door unlocked while you made a quick trip to the store or to a neighbor's house?

If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions, you're putting yourself at risk. Don't make it easy for a burglar to get into your home. Follow the safety tips on the next page.

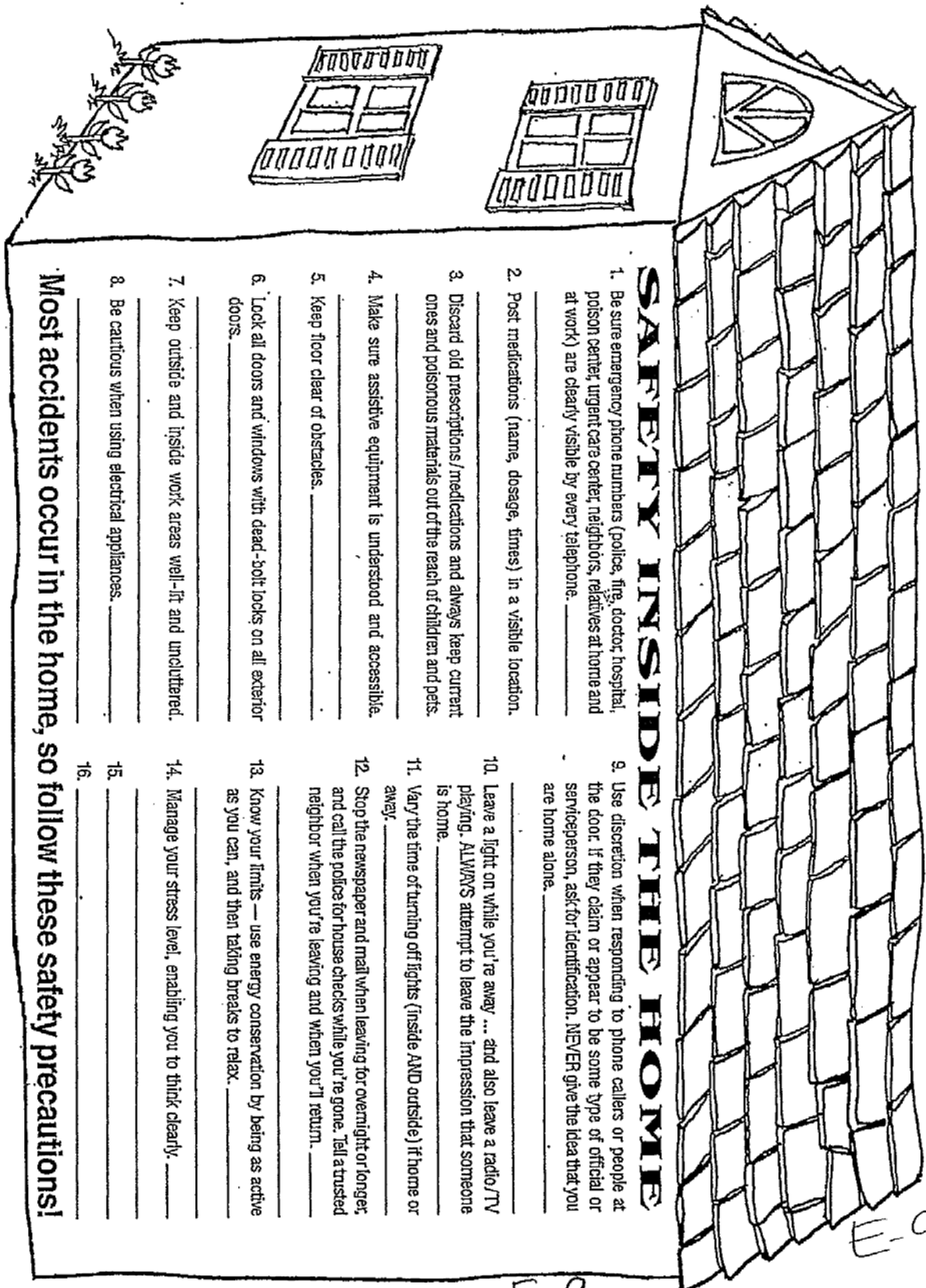
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CRIME PREVENTION TIPS FOR HOME SAFETY

- Don't open the door to anyone you do not know without first finding out who the person is and what he/she wants.
- Install a peephole or wide-angle viewer in your door so you can see who is outside without opening the door. A short chain between the door and its frame is not a good substitute, as it can be easily broken.
- Ask to see an identification badge or card for any repairman, meter reader, policeman, etc., before you allow him or her into your home.
- Put deadbolt locks on your doors, not the spring latch type with the key hole in the knob.
- Be sure to keep your entry way, porch, and yard well lighted.
- Do not put any personal identification on your key ring.



- Give only your ignition key to the car mechanic or parking lot attendant.
- Don't give any information to "wrong number" callers. Ask what number the person was trying to reach.
- Hang up immediately on any threatening or harassing telephone calls. If the caller persists, call the police and the telephone company.
- Check references of any person calling about a survey or credit check before volunteering information. Offer to call the person back instead of responding immediately.
- If you'll be away from home for a few days or so, ask someone to pick up your mail or have the post office hold your mail until you return.
- You can also buy inexpensive timing devices to turn on and off inside lights, a radio, or a television set at different times during the evening or night.
- Burglars hope to avoid confrontations, so make your home look occupied.



SAFETY INSIDE THE HOME

1. Be sure emergency phone numbers (police, fire, doctor, hospital, poison center, urgent care center, neighbors, relatives at home and at work) are clearly visible by every telephone. _____
2. Post medications (name, dosage, times) in a visible location. _____
3. Discard old prescriptions/medications and always keep current ones and poisonous materials out of the reach of children and pets. _____
4. Make sure assistive equipment is understood and accessible. _____
5. Keep floor clear of obstacles. _____
6. Lock all doors and windows with dead-bolt locks on all exterior doors. _____
7. Keep outside and inside work areas well-lit and uncluttered. _____
8. Be cautious when using electrical appliances. _____
9. Use discretion when responding to phone callers or people at the door. If they claim or appear to be some type of official or serviceperson, ask for identification. NEVER give the idea that you are home alone. _____
10. Leave a light on while you're away ... and also leave a radio/TV playing. ALWAYS attempt to leave the impression that someone is home. _____
11. Vary the time of turning off lights (inside AND outside) if home or away. _____
12. Stop the newspaper and mail when leaving for overnight or longer, and call the police for house checks while you're gone. Tell a trusted neighbor when you're leaving and when you'll return. _____
13. Know your limits — use energy conservation by being as active as you can, and then taking breaks to relax. _____
14. Manage your stress level, enabling you to think clearly. _____
15. _____
16. _____

Most accidents occur in the home, so follow these safety precautions!

SAFETY...

OUTSIDE THE HOME



How safe are you outside of your home??? Rate yourself:

0 = NEVER 1 = SOMETIMES 2 = ALWAYS

- A ___ When leaving your home, do you put your extra house keys somewhere other than in a flowerpot or under a doormat?
- B ___ When outside, do you look around?
- C ___ Are you aware of safe spaces and safe distances?
- D ___ Are you aware of high-risk and low-risk areas?
- E ___ Would you be able to describe surroundings?
- F ___ Are you ready to think, to move, or to scream/yell at a moment's notice?
- G ___ Do you trust your instincts?
- H ___ Do you leave a situation/place if you feel uncomfortable?
- I ___ Are you careful of which people you talk to?
- J ___ Are you careful of what you say when talking to strangers/acquaintances?
- K ___ Do you carry keys in your hands?
- L ___ Do you remember your body language, giving the appearance of being aware, alert and assertive?
- M ___ Do you carry purse/wallet/money only if necessary?
- N ___ Do you keep money and valuables close to body and conceal, if possible?
- O ___ Do you wear your safety belt as a driver and as a passenger?
- P ___ Do you keep car doors locked, even when stopped in an emergency?
- Q ___ Do you keep an index card in your car with phone numbers of significant others and coins taped to it for phone calls?
- R ___ Do you check under the car and car interior (front and rear) before entering?
- S ___ When in your car, do you have a way of signalling for help?
- T ___ Do you try not to walk alone?
- U ___ When walking, do you wear non-restrictive shoes or clothing?
- V ___ Do you avoid overloading yourself with packages when walking?
- W ___ Do you wear highly-visible clothing when walking/jogging/biking, etc.?
- X ___ Do you make it a rule never to hitchhike?
- Y ___ Do you make it a rule never to pick up hitchhikers?
- Z ___ Are you on the lookout for any problems that affect your neighborhood's safety?

___ TOTAL

Score: 0-13 = Safety Alert!
14-26 = Uh-oh! Don't be so trusting!
27-39 = You're doing well, but you can still fine-tune your safety skills!
40-52 = Bravo! Keep up the good work!

BE SAFE!! DON'T BE A VICTIM! E-10