



# BATAVIA FIRE DEPARTMENT

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## HOME SAFETY SURVEY GUIDE

### 1. EXTERIOR

- A. Fire hydrant should be clear and accessible for Fire Department use.
- B. House numbers and/or rural sign should be visible from the street, contrasting to house, numbers used only. Script numbering is harder for rescue personnel to find, i.e.: *One hundred twenty-eight* vs. 128.
- C. Combustibles near buildings - home, garage and any other outbuilding should be clear of any materials which may add fuel to a fire, i.e. weeds, trash, pile or stacks of lumber, tree branches and other combustible waste materials in yards and under porches and houses are readily ignited. Tall grass and vegetation should be kept 30 feet from home. Trees should not be allowed to hang over roof line.
- D. Buildings in good repair – cleanliness and good maintenance are important precautions against fire.
- E. Roof in good repair – roofing that is old and warped is easily ignited by sparks and flying embers.
- F. Electrical service – service to buildings should be secure and in good repair.
- G. Gas meter – should be accessible to the Fire Department.

### 2. ELECTRICAL

- A. Extension Cords
  - 1. Too many extension cords used tend to cause a fire danger, i.e. cords easily overloaded become worn, usually used because of lack of circuits in home.
  - 2. Overloaded outlets – an electrical outlet normally has two openings for power supply. Adding additional appliances or extension cords over the two supplied may cause overloading and a fire hazard.

3. Circuit breaker type – if an extension cord must be used, an extension cord with a built in circuit breaker should be used. This type of cord will cut power to whatever it supplies in the event of overloading, power surge, faulty appliance, etc.
4. Worn or damaged extension cords – frayed or missing insulation on cords is a fire hazard as well as a shock hazard. Cords should not be run under rugs or over nails as this will cause undo wear and breakdown of the insulation.
5. Improperly used cords – extension cords are made for specific uses. Cords should not be spliced or used for appliances. A common hazard is a small cord used to power a large appliance, i.e.: a regular household extension cord to power an air conditioner.

B. Fuse or Breaker Panel

1. Oversized fuses – must be avoided, i.e.: do not install a 25 amp fuse where a 14 amp fuse should be used. If an improper fuse size is suspected; ask the homeowner if they have had previous problems with any area of the home's electrical system, i.e.: blown fuses. Improper fuse size may cause a fire by overheating the circuit. Fuse sizes normally are 10, 15 and 20 amps.
2. Electrical panels – should be clear of any combustibles and accessible. An electric panel may produce heat, or in case of an electrical problem, may spark or arc.
3. All circuits in the electric panel should be labeled. If a problem should occur, the bad circuit can easily be disabled without shutting down power to the entire home.

C. Grounded plugs and outlets – any appliance with a ground should be plugged into a grounded (3 prong) outlet to prevent shock hazard.

D. Washer and Dryer – should be plugged into a grounded (3 prong) outlet to prevent shock.

E. Dryer lint trap and exhaust – should be kept clean and free of lint build up. Excessive lint is a fire hazard.

F. Lamps and appliances used safely – special attention should be given to Halogen lamps. They give off excessive heat, so combustibles such as curtains should be kept clear. Any appliance not in use should be kept unplugged to prevent being turned on accidentally.

### 3. HEATING

- A. Furnace sound and in good condition – furnace should be cleaned and clear or any combustibles (3 feet).
- B. All fuel fired heaters should maintain a 3 feet clearance from combustibles.
- C. Flue pipes – should be solid and not loose fitting to prevent a carbon monoxide problem. Rust or scale on pipes or joints indicate a possible leak.
- D. Chimney solid – check bricks and wood exterior of chimney for any obvious damage.
- E. Fuel supply connection and shutoff accessibility – should be easily accessible in the event fuel needs to be shut off to furnace.
- F. Furnace serviced annually – should be serviced annually by a professional.
- G. Ashes should be stored in a metal container outside and away from the home and disposed of properly.
- H. Portable heaters used properly – only use electric portable heaters inside the home. Any type of fuel space heater should be vented properly. Space heaters should be kept away from combustibles.
- I. Furnace filters should be checked every 30-60 days and changed when they are dirty.

### 4. BASEMENT

- A. Excess combustibles – make sure there is not an excess amount of combustible storage, and any combustibles are clear of appliances such as furnaces and water heaters.
- B. Combustibles under stairs – combustible items should not be stored under stairs.
- C. Valves on each gas appliance – make sure there is a shutoff valve on each gas appliance to use in case of a fire or gas incident.
- D. Hot Water Heater
  - 1. Should be clear of any combustibles
  - 2. Relief valve – make sure the water heater has a shut off relief valve.
- E. Tools and Work area clean and maintained.
- F. Escape windows clear – clear path to escape windows, no storage or appliances blocking access.

## **5. KITCHEN**

- A. Stove and hood should be clear of grease to prevent fires.
- B. Appliances – if not in use, appliances should be unplugged to prevent them from accidentally being turned on.
- C. Fire extinguisher – each kitchen should have a fire extinguisher. Facts show the kitchen is the number 1 area of accidental fires.

## **6. FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS**

- A. Cabinet provided – the safest storage of flammable liquids is in the proper type of cabinet.
- B. Improperly kept – flammable liquids should never be kept in the basement or near any open flame, i.e.: water heater, furnace, etc.
- C. Safe containers – proper containers should be used. Capped metal approved containers.

## **7. EXIT OR ESCAPE**

- A. Exit ways clear – all exit ways need to stay clear for resident safety.
- B. Smoke Detectors – must be installed on all levels of the home (living areas) and maintained. Change battery once each year. This is State Law.
- C. Carbon Monoxide detectors – installed in area not blocked by furniture, curtains or near ceiling fans. Detector should be installed outside bedrooms.
- D. Bedroom doors closed at night – it is a safety precaution used to keep smoke from entering the bedroom in case of a night time fire. Most victims of fire are due to smoke inhalation, not burns. Smoke will not wake you, it actually puts you into a deeper sleep, then possible death.
- E. A second means of egress from upper floors – is desirable in case your primary escape route is blocked by smoke or fire. All family members should be able to open their bedroom windows.
- F. Exit plan – have one and practice it at least twice a year. This will help eliminate confusion in case of fire.
- G. 911- post it on or near the phone.

## **8. FIRE EXTINGUISHERS IN PLACE AND MAINTAINED**

Extinguishers should be hung to allow easy access. They should also be inspected every 2 years by a trained technician.

**9. SAFE SMOKING HABITS**

Use large ashtrays and dispose of cigarette butts properly. Check cushions after parties for dropped cigarettes.

**10. BABYSITTERS SHOULD UNDERSTAND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Babysitters should know to call 911 for an emergency, know the address of your home and know the escape plan.

**11. FAMILY KNOWS CPR**

Does the family know CPR?

**12. FAMILY HAS FIRST AID EQUIPMENT**

Family should have a basic first aid kit and know proper use of kit.