FOND DU LAC FIREFIGHTERS LOCAL 400

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2. www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention
3. www.sparky.org

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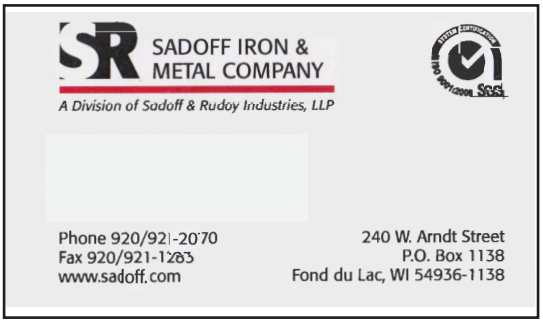

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107.1 THE BUZZ

Babysitting Safety

Having a babysitter can give you peace of mind. It allows you to leave your child with someone you trust. Be sure your babysitter knows about fire safety. Be sure your babysitter knows what to do if there is a fire.

Show the babysitter your home escape plan and make sure the babysitter understands:

- two ways out of every room.
- where the outdoor meeting place is located.
- the fire department or emergency phone number.
- how to unlock all doors and windows.

If you allow your babysitter to cook, make sure the babysitter:

- keeps your child at least 3 feet away from the stove.
- keeps your child at least 3 feet away from the microwave oven.
- never leaves the room while cooking.
- keeps anything that can catch fire away from the stovetop.
- keeps pets off surfaces and countertops.

If the smoke alarm sounds make sure your babysitter knows to:

- get out of the home quickly with your child to safety.
- use the second way out if smoke is in the way.
- get low and go under the smoke to the exit if an escape must be made through smoke.

Store matches and lighters out of your child's reach. Candles should not be used by your babysitter.

Make sure your babysitter keeps a 3-foot "kid-free zone" around space heaters.

REMEMBER

Always leave the phone number where you can be reached. Cell phones make this easy. Be sure the babysitter knows the address of the home.

Babysitter Training

Many places offer babysitter classes. These are online and in the classroom. Some schools and hospitals give training. Classes teach how to care for children. They also teach first aid. They teach CPR. What to do in an emergency is also taught.

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Safe Escape

"Escape rooms have become a booming industry worldwide, but with growth have come concerns over the safety of participants."

BY ANGELO VERZONI - *is a staff writer for NFPA Journal. Photograph: Getty Images*

Our wacky professor had done it again—he'd gotten himself trapped in some dark corner of the space-time continuum, and we had 60 minutes to repair his time machine, tucked inside an old clock tower, and rescue him. If we failed, he'd be stuck there forever.

That was the setup for a recent escape room outing I organized with my girlfriend, along with her sister and brother-in-law.

Around the world, escape rooms are a booming form of entertainment that involve confining paying customers inside a space, the goal being to escape the room or to keep moving into other rooms by solving puzzles or other brain-busting challenges, typically in 60 minutes or less. The attractions come in an array of themes, from medieval mysteries to futuristic adventures, and as the industry's popularity has expanded, many of the rooms have similarly grown in sophistication and complexity. On a drizzly Friday afternoon in May, we made our way to downtown Boston to see for ourselves what all the buzz was about.

Our destination was Escape the Room Boston, which operates three distinctly themed escape rooms—The Apartment, The Dig, and our game, The Clock Tower—on the third floor of a nondescript concrete building in the heart of Boston's theater district. Entering the building was a bit of a puzzle in itself; to get the front door to unlock, we had to call up to the escape room from a phone hanging on the building's exterior. Once inside, we made our way to an elevator, which opened directly to the lobby of the business, whose space was clearly repurposed and much smaller than I had imagined. I could feel my expectations sink a bit as I looked around the cramped quarters.

But 10 minutes later, after we'd each paid our $30 admission and entered The Clock Tower room, my expectations were again on the rise. The room—which we would later learn was one in a series of three separate rooms constituting The Clock Tower—was intricately designed in the manner of a steampunk laboratory that looked like the haunt of a mad scientist, plastered with a jumble of clocks and lab equipment. Seconds after we entered the first room, a prominent neon-red timer began ticking down from 60 minutes. The game was on.

In this episode of Learn Something New by NFPA Journal®, we learn what special amusement buildings are and some of the ways the code works to protect them from fire and other life safety hazards.

We moved as swiftly as we could around the space, rifling through drawers and cabinets, flicking switches, and punching buttons in the hope of revealing clues or objects that would get us closer to freeing our time-hopping friend. We made it deep into the game, solving enough puzzles to progress into the third and final room. But with just a minute left and important clues still unsolved, I knew it was over. As the timer struck zero, speakers mounted on the ceiling bellowed a resounding womp womp, the universal sound of failure. The game had ended, and our professor remained stuck in some dank fold of time. We hadn't even managed to get ourselves out of the clock tower.

Even so, the experience was worth the price of admission. It was my first time in an escape room, but it likely won't be my last—the experience was genuinely fun, like being part of a movie or television show as opposed to idly watching it go by on a screen. I was impressed with the quality of set materials and the special effects. The puzzles were tricky yet solvable, and it was a good way to bond with friends and family.

But for anyone familiar with escape rooms, it's not hard to see that the outcome can be very different if the concept is taken too literally.

In January, in the small city of Koszalin in northern Poland, a group of five teenage girls was participating in an escape room when a gas leak in the facility's heating system reportedly sparked a fire. When the girls tried to escape, they found that the doors to their room had actually been locked—their only way out was to win the game. All five died in the fire. The owner of the business was charged with "deliberately creating the danger of a fire" and "unintentionally causing the death of people in a fire," according to media reports.

Even though the teens' deaths were the first known fatalities in an escape room anywhere in the world, according to the Guardian, the incident left many observers expressing concern over escape room safety. News organizations like Inside Edition in the United States, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and the Irish Examiner newspaper ran stories with headlines such as "Are escape rooms safe?" and "How safe are escape rooms?," citing the incident in Poland.

What this reporting, conversations with escape room experts, and my own experience have revealed is that escape room attractions are generally regarded as safe by those who design, own and operate, and even regulate them. But that doesn't mean they're all code compliant, and public safety professionals have questions and concerns over what corners may be getting cut in these facilities. For these reasons and others, it's critical for authorities having jurisdiction (AHJs) to be vigilant about escape room safety and for organizations like NFPA to update widely used codes and standards like NFPA 101®, Life Safety Code®, to reflect the industry's emergence. New language pertaining to escape rooms has been proposed for the 2021 edition of the code.

"I've done [an escape room] once, and it's kind of fun," said Gregory Harrington, the NFPA staff liaison to NFPA 101. "But if they're not done correctly, they can be dangerous. It's a concern, and we need to get the word out to AHJs that they need to be cautious about how they're permitting these things."

CONCERNS OVER CODE COMPLIANCE

Before my attempt at freeing the fictional professor and escaping The Clock Tower, I had planned to ask our hosts at Escape the Room Boston about safety and about how we could get out in an emergency. But I didn't have to. Prior to entering the room, an escape room employee briefed our group on what to expect as well as what to do if we needed to get out, either for an emergency or for something as innocuous as needing to use the bathroom. There's a clearly visible button inside each room that, when pressed, opens the door, she explained, adding, "We can't lock you

in for real." Later, I noticed the room also had fire extinguishers and fire sprinklers.

On the surface, such a system seems safe, but Harrington voiced concerns when I described it to him days later.

NO ESCAPE Forensic and other police experts examine the site of a fire at an escape room facility in Poland that killed five teenage girls in January. The girls were unable to escape the attraction when a fire broke out due to a gas leak in a heating system. Photograph: AP/WIDE WORLD

NFPA 101, he told me, typically requires the release mechanism of a door to be on the door hardware itself, not activated by a button positioned off to the side. "If there's no light or there's smoke and you're crawling on the floor, you can feel around for the door hardware and have a good chance of finding it, whereas if you have a button off to the side, you may not be able to find it, especially if you're not familiar with the environment," Harrington said. Exceptions to this rule allowed by NFPA 101, he added, are for certain health care facilities like psychiatric wards and nurseries, or in jails and prisons. "But in an entertainment venue, at least in my opinion, it's not justified. It goes against the fundamental tenet of the code, which says egress shouldn't require special knowledge under normal or emergency conditions."

Forensic and other police experts examine the site of a fire at an escape room.
The door-locking system that appeared to be present at Escape the Room Boston was pretty much what I had expected. A couple of days before visiting the escape room, I talked to John Denley, a veteran consultant in the world of escape rooms and other special amusement attractions like haunted houses. He told me that magnetic lock systems with a button or switch to exit are common in escape rooms.

Even if they're not NFPA 101 compliant, such systems might be better than having a door that can only be opened with the help of an attendant on the outside or by winning the game—which was the case in Poland, and which is a setup Denley said he's never seen in his experience designing hundreds of escape rooms across the US. Interestingly, he said, safety isn't the only reason that this is the case.

For starters, he explained, an amusement based solely on the feeling of being locked in a room with no way out but to win the game or call for help isn't that appealing—people today expect an experience that's more immersive and interactive. "We also realize that people react psychologically much differently when they're locked in," Denley said. "They become more aggressive...and that can lead to the destruction of the props, which can cost thousands of dollars, depending on the complexity of the room."

Denley said consumers' rejection of simplistic escape rooms—where, for example, the exit door is secured by a padlock and the room contains clues revealing the lock's combination—has made the industry self-governing to a certain degree from a safety perspective. And any concern over escape room safety, even in the wake of the Poland incident and questions over code compliance,

would be misguided, he contended, when similar attractions like haunted houses generate bigger safety concerns, including dark environments and convoluted egress paths, factors that typically aren't present in escape rooms.

"The [egress] path is not convoluted in an escape room, and it's not incredibly dark," Denley said. "We also inform participants that they're being watched constantly. There are cameras in the room and somebody's watching every moment." The employees who watch the games and communicate via a screen or speaker to participants in order to give them clues or tell them not to do something unsafe, like try to move a piece of furniture, would in theory also be able to spot signs of a fire or medical emergency and intervene, Denley added.

KEEPING WATCH Escape rooms are monitored by facility employees who observe participants via video and provide clues over a speaker system. Monitors also theoretically assist participants in the event of an emergency. Prominent clocks count down the time remaining in the game. Photographs: Getty Images

For Harrington and most public safety experts, though, having somebody monitor the room might do little to increase safety. "What happens if the fire prevents the moderator from getting to the locked room?" Harrington said. "What happens if the moderator is a high school kid and panics and leaves?"

THE GLOBAL SITUATION

Globally, even more questions and concerns are being raised over escape room safety.

In 2015, Scott Nicholson, a professor of game design and development at Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario, Canada, conducted a study on escape rooms in five of the world's seven continents—Asia, Australia, Europe, and North and South America. After surveying 175 escape rooms in these areas, Nicholson found that a surprising number of facilities said players cannot get out of the room without a staff member letting them out.

"In about 30 percent of the responding facilities, the players are actually locked into the room and have no way to let themselves out; this poses a significant safety concern," Nicholson wrote in the study. "Some proprietors state that this is what the players signed up for—to be locked in a room—but if there is a single well-publicized incident, it could be bad for the escape room industry." Europe had the highest percentage of escape rooms in which players couldn't get out without assistance, at 43 percent; Asian and North American escape rooms reported 20 and 21 percent, respectively, with such circumstances, while none were found in Australia.

"The most common solution, as seen in 37 percent of the facilities," Nicholson continued, "is to provide the players with a way to exit the room in an emergency, such as a key for a mechanical door or a push button for a door lock powered by electricity (which would then unlock if the power went out)."

Again, Harrington pointed out that such a system would not be compliant with NFPA 101—what would be compliant are doors that don't lock at all. "Just create the illusion of a locked door, and that's fine," Harrington said, adding that when he participated in an escape room in Worcester, Massachusetts, about a year ago, the doors remained unlocked for the entire game.

In his study, Nicholson found completely unlocked doors in just 22 percent of the rooms. "This percentage is higher for North and South America (36 percent) and much higher in Australia (67 percent)," he said. "Another solution is to provide a secondary exit that the players can access."

In a series of emails to NFPA Journal in May, Nicholson was quick to note that, at least anecdotally, "the industry has improved significantly" in the four years since he conducted his research. While that means fewer rooms are locking participants in with no way of getting out except to win the game or call for help, it's unclear whether compliance with NFPA 101 has improved.

Harrington, for one, has doubts that it has, since a high level of ignorance seems to persist over what systems are actually code compliant. "I'm guessing a lot of installations that are not compliant with NFPA 101 are happening in escape rooms," he said. Magnetic locking systems with a button or switch to unlock the door aren't completely disallowed by the code, Harrington explained. But in a non-specialized occupancy to be compliant they require redundant means of functioning, such as a sensor that unlocks the door when somebody walks in front of it. They should also be connected to a building's fire alarm and sprinkler systems to unlock when either of those systems activate. The provisions related to such door locking systems appear to be "widely misunderstood and misapplied," Harrington said.

Still, the most dangerous escape room scenario, in which players are locked in with no way out but to win the game or call for help, seems to have dissipated globally in the past few years.

"For example, in the Toronto market, players are not allowed to be [completely] locked in," Nicholson said. "This caused a number of rooms to close, or to be altered to make spaces where players could always get out."

Likewise, an article published by the Irish Examiner in May found that escape rooms throughout the European country are generally seen as safe by the fire service, and those that weren't have been shut down. "In a good escape room, the basic thing is not that you are exactly escaping the room," one escape room owner told the Examiner. "It's about working out puzzles, be that identifying a smell, putting a hard drive in the right place, or working out a mathematical puzzle. To be 'locked in' is not necessary. We have emergency exits and…players can leave the room whenever they want."

But the Poland incident shows safety improvements haven't been universal. Following the blaze, Polish officials ordered fire safety checks at all of the country's escape rooms; more than 1,000 violations were uncovered, about half of which related to issues with emergency exits, and dozens of facilities were shut down, the New York Times reported.

"The tragedy in Koszalin last week shows that in some countries there is still a way to go towards dealing with this issue," an article published in the Economist in January read. "Escape rooms in Britain and America are safer: fire regulations and laws prohibiting kidnap mean that [participants] cannot be locked in without an alternative means to set themselves free. But that is not true elsewhere in Europe."

AHJ CONCERNS PERSIST

Even with what Denley described as the self-governance of escape rooms occurring in the US, and with anecdotal evidence of increased escape room safety abroad, AHJ involvement through the process of building and maintaining escape rooms is critical.

In 2016, escape rooms first came to the attention of Vinny Quinterno, a fire safety training officer for the Rhode Island State Fire Marshal's Office who serves on three NFPA technical committees. Some members of the general public had voiced concerns to the state's fire service over a new attraction that was "locking people inside rooms," Quinterno told me in May, so he and a couple of other fire safety professionals went to check it out.

DIFF'RENT STROKES As the industry grows, so does the array of escape room themes and novelties. Left, participants search for clues in a jail-themed escape room. Right, participants encounter a brave new world in a promotional photo for a new escape room in London, England. Photographs: left, Newscom; right, Reuters

What they found was that the escape room in question wasn't actually locking participants in—but operators weren't explaining that to participants, and they also weren't informing them of what to do in the event of an emergency like a fire.

Quinterno's first reaction wasn't to blame the business, but rather the state's inspection system. "It bothered me," he said. "I was thinking to myself, 'What are we doing wrong here to have [a business like this] fall through the cracks? Are we not educating escape room owners about the importance of having an emergency action plan?'" It was especially troubling for him given the fact that Rhode Island was the site of one of the deadliest assembly occupancy fires in US history, when The Station nightclub burned in West Warwick in 2003, killing 100 people. Since his first encounter with escape rooms three years ago, Quinterno said he "would like to think things have improved," but he hasn't visited enough of them to know for sure.

According to Denley, improvement has happened. For the 200 or so escape rooms he's helped design, the owners or facility managers have all had good relationships with the local AHJ, he told me, even if sometimes he's been the one initiating those relationships.

"I always get the building inspectors and fire marshals involved from the very beginning, and I think anyone who doesn't is a fool who's asking for trouble," Denley said. "It's all about checks and balances. It doesn't take a lot to comply and do it safely." One thing Denley stresses in his work, for example, is the importance of educating escape room employees on emergency evacuation procedures, and he's found "that goes a long way with the fire marshals."

Quinterno still worries, though, that even if the inspection and permitting process for escape rooms has evolved over the years, the changing nature of escape rooms—it's typical for an escape room to offer new and rotating attractions—could present hazards. "While these escape rooms might comply when they open, who's to say that they stay in compliance once in operation, such as after redesigning a room?" he said. "Are AHJs approving these modified plans?"

Quinterno hopes the regulation of escape rooms will become clearer with the release of the 2021 edition of NFPA 101. Annex language related to escape rooms has been proposed for the future edition of the code, an effort led by a task group that included Quinterno. (See more on proposed changes to NFPA 101 related to escape rooms in this issue's "In Compliance.")

The proposed language would, among other things, offer guidance on whether to classify escape rooms as special amusement buildings, business occupancies, or something else. Special amusement buildings, being a type of assembly occupancy, warrant more stringent means of fire and life safety protection, including automatic fire sprinklers and smoke detection systems that, when activated, also trigger the illumination of emergency lighting.

Quinterno said he favors the special amusement classification, but Harrington warned it could unnecessarily put some facilities out of business. "For the one I went to in Worcester, there'd be no reason to classify it as a special amusement building," Harrington said. Even so, Quinterno said he prefers to "err on the side of caution."

"Unfortunately, I feel that sometimes people get carried away," Quinterno said. "The special amusement classification is a bit more restrictive and requires a sprinkler system and a supervised fire alarm system. … We're such a reactionary society and we need to be more proactive."

College Campus Fire Safety

College students living away from home should take a few minutes to make sure they are living in a fire-safe environment. Educating students on what they can do to stay safe during the school year is important and often overlooked.

SAFETY TIPS

- Look for fully sprinklered housing when choosing a dorm or off-campus housing.
- Make sure you can hear the building alarm system when you are in your dorm room.
- If you live in a dormitory, make sure your sleeping room has a smoke alarm, or your dormitory suite has a smoke alarm in each living area as well as the sleeping room. For the best protection, all smoke alarms in the dormitory suite should be interconnected so that when one sounds, they all sound.
- If you live in an apartment or house, make sure smoke alarms are installed in each sleeping room, outside every sleeping area, and on each level of the apartment unit or house. For the best protection, all smoke alarms in the apartment unit or house should be interconnected so that when one sounds, they all sound.
- Test all smoke alarms at least monthly.
- Never remove batteries or disable the alarm.
- Learn your building's evacuation plan and practice all drills as if they were the real thing.
- If you live off campus, have a fire escape plan with two ways out of every room.
- When the smoke alarm or fire alarm sounds, get out of the building quickly and stay out.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking.
- Cook only when you are alert, not sleepy or drowsy from medicine or alcohol.
- Check with your local fire department for any restrictions before using a barbeque grill, fire pit, or chimenea.
- Check your school's rules before using electrical appliances in your room.

Smoking Sense

If you smoke, smoke outside and only where it is permitted, Use sturdy, deep, non-tip ashtrays. Don't smoke in bed or when you've been drinking or are drowsy.

Candle Care

Burn candles only if the school permits their use. A candle is an open flame and should be placed away from anything that can burn. Never leave a candle unattended. Blow it out when you leave the room or go to sleep.

FACT

- Fires in dormitories are more common during the evening hours, between 5–11 pm, and on weekends.
- Roughly six out of seven fires in dormitories are started by cooking.

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Children and Fire

Safety Tips for Caregivers

Children "playing" with or starting fires is dangerous and costly. Each year these fires cause hundreds of injuries, millions of dollars in damage, and are most likely to kill young children under the age of 5.

Some children play with fire out of curiosity, boredom, or peer pressure, not realizing its danger. But other children misuse fire because they are struggling with problems or emotions. Without proper intervention and instruction, children who misuse fire will very likely do it again. However, if punishment is the only intervention strategy used, it could actually contribute to the problem. What can you do?

Follow these tips to keep your family safe:

- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children, up high, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Closely supervise children, making sure that they are kept away from other fire sources, including lit candles, cigarettes, bonfires, and stoves.
- It is natural for young children to be curious and ask questions about fire, play with fire trucks, or pretend to cook. Use these opportunities to teach them about fire safety.
- Explain that fire moves very fast and can hurt as soon as it touches them. Tell them that this is why matches and lighters are tools for adults only.
- Teach young children to never touch matches or lighters. They must go tell a grown-up when matches or lighters are found.
- Establish clear rules and consequences about unsupervised and unauthorized uses of fire.
- Be a good example! Always use fire sources — matches, lighters, candles, fireplaces, and campfires — in a safe manner. Never treat them as toys, or children may imitate you.
- Talk with children about what their friends or other children are doing with fire. What are they seeing online in video games, on TV, in movies, and on social media? Teach them specific ways to resist the peer pressure to misuse fire.
- Give praise for showing respect and age-appropriate responsible behavior toward fire.

Important!

Understand that children and fire are a **deadly combination**. If you suspect a child is unusually interested in fire or is setting fires, take immediate action. Follow these safety tips. Contact your local fire department, school, burn center, or counseling agency to get help from specially trained experts.

All children are at risk for using fire unsafely. Many fires happen simply because matches and lighters are left within a child's reach.

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Cooking Safety

Cooking brings family and friends together, provides an outlet for creativity and can be relaxing. But did you know that cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home injuries? By following a few safety tips you can prevent these fires.

"COOK WITH CAUTION"

- Be on alert! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol don't use the stove or stovetop.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, boiling, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.

If you have a small (grease) cooking fire and decide to fight the fire...

- On the stovetop, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
- For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.

If you have any doubt about fighting a small fire...

- Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
- Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number from outside the home.

Cooking and Kids

Have a "kid-free zone" of at least 3 feet (1 metre) around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.

FACTS

- The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.
- Most cooking fires in the home involve the kitchen stove.

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Takeaways from a hoarding intervention strategy

A recent study of the City of Vancouver's Hoarding Action Response Team provides key takeaways for fire departments.

Posted: March 14, 2019

Hoarding poses increased fire safety risks as hoarded items often include combustibles — such as reading materials or clothing — piled on or near heating sources. Hoarded materials may also impede escape in the event of fire and can impair first responder entry, navigation and exit.

Hoarding is identified by the American Psychiatric Association as a mental disorder characterized by the accumulation of clutter to the point where it interferes with the functional use of the home. Between two and six percent of the general population is estimated to suffer from the hoarding disorder.

Hoarding intervention challenges

An effective intervention into a hoarding situation by fire departments and community agencies can be difficult. Residents may:

- Be embarrassed about their behavior.
- Lack the organizational skills to make necessary changes.
- Be overly attached to belongings.
- Lack insight into dangers posed by hoarding.
- Revert to the same behavior if moved to a new location.
- Reject the authority of enforcement officials.

The City of Vancouver's intervention approach

In May 2012, the City of Vancouver (Canada) formed a multi-agency Hoarding Action Response Team (HART) comprised of fire and property inspection departments, along with mental health workers from the city's health department. Their purpose was to build a coordinated intervention whenever hoarding cases were identified.

Vancouver Fire Rescue Service Protocol

Upon referral, a fire inspector and health official will:

- Make an initial visit to see if the case is serious enough to warrant an intervention.

- Assess home safety and the physical and mental health of the resident.
- Work to develop a good relationship with the resident to get voluntary entry for the fire inspection.
- Determine if a situation involves imminent danger. Such a situation triggers immediate action by the HART. This might include steps such as installing smoke alarms, disconnecting the stove if open flames are near combustible items, and in extreme cases, barring anyone from living in the home until the fire danger is resolved.
- Communicate the health and safety concerns to the resident(s) following inspection. The HART will then develop an intervention strategy that often involves repeated visits to the home to ensure progress is made toward compliance with safety issues.

The team will also make referrals for social, health and mental health resources. Health workers may assist by:

- Advocacy with landlords.
- Engaging social services.
- Helping the resident set manageable weekly goals.
- Educating family members and the resident about hoarding.

Key takeaways from the HART intervention approach

1. Hoarding cases can be particularly challenging if there are many fire code violations or if the hoarder is a homeowner. Homeowners have strong property rights and can delay inspections and withhold cooperation.
2. Hoarding cases require patience. For this study, cases took an average of 4 ½ months to resolve. Ninety-four percent of the cases were successfully resolved by using an informal, relationship-oriented strategy.
3. Build goodwill and form a supportive relationship first. Offer community services, such as free smoke alarm installation, to gain voluntary admittance for the initial inspection. Raise the possibility of legal sanctions, such as fines and eviction, only if necessary.
4. Invest resources into hoarding intervention. You must ensure inspectors are trained to recognize when egress problems or excessive combustibles pose an imminent danger or when a slower approach is acceptable. Train staff to understand hoarding as a mental illness and how to effectively collaborate with other community agencies.
5. Communication is key. All team members must be consistent in their communications with hoarding residents, so good case notes are essential. Hoarders often may not fully recognize the severity of their problem and their motivation to make changes can fluctuate. For the best success, give clear, specific and manageable goals to hoarding residents.

[1]*Kowk, N., Bratiotis, C., Luu, M., Kysow, K., Woody, S., Lauster, N. (2018). Examining the role of fire prevention on hoarding response teams: Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services as a case study. Fire Technology: 54 (1), pp 57-73. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10694-017-0672-0*

Carbon Monoxide Safety

Often called the invisible killer, carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel can be sources of carbon monoxide.

- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes or standards. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Choose a CO alarm that is listed by a qualified testing laboratory.
- Call your local fire department's non-emergency number to find out what number to call if the CO alarm sounds.
- Test CO alarms at least once a month; replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, call the fire department.
- If the CO alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for. Call for help from a fresh air location and stay there until emergency personnel declare that it is safe to re-enter the home.
- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not covered with snow.
- During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.
- A generator should be used in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors and vent openings.
- Gas or charcoal grills can produce CO — only use outside.

HOME HEATING EQUIPMENT

Have fuel-burning heating equipment and chimneys inspected by a professional every year before cold weather sets in. When using a fireplace, open the flue for adequate ventilation. Never use your oven to heat your home.

FACTS

- A person can be poisoned by a small amount of CO over a longer period of time or by a large amount of CO over a shorter amount of time.
- In 2010, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 80,100 non-fire CO incidents in which carbon monoxide was found, or an average of nine calls per hour.

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Escape

Plan Ahead! If a fire breaks out in your home, you may have only a few minutes to get out safely once the smoke alarm sounds. Everyone needs to know what to do and where to go if there is a fire.

- HAVE an outside meeting place (like a tree, light pole or mailbox) a safe distance from the home where everyone should meet.
- PRACTICE your home fire drill at night and during the day with everyone in your home, twice a year.
- PRACTICE using different ways out.
- TEACH children how to escape on their own in case you can't help them.
- CLOSE doors behind you as you leave.

IF THE ALARM SOUNDS...

- If the smoke alarm sounds, GET OUT AND STAY OUT. Never go back inside for people or pets.
- If you have to escape through smoke, GET LOW AND GO under the smoke to your way out.
- CALL the fire department from outside your home.

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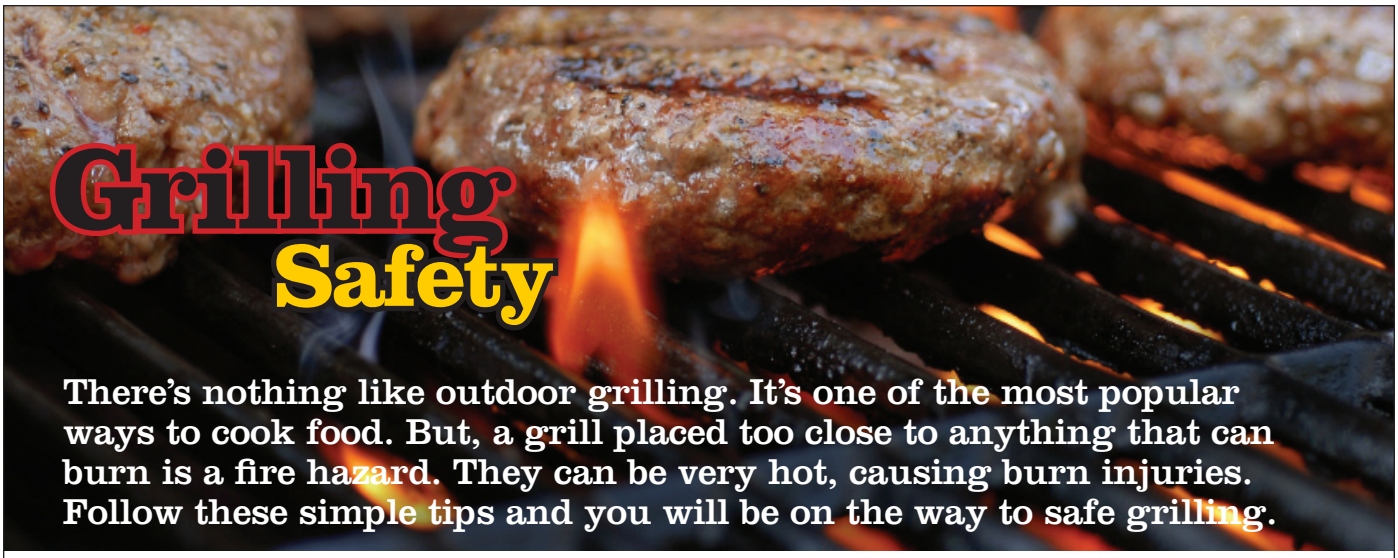


Grilling Safety

There's nothing like outdoor grilling. It's one of the most popular ways to cook food. But, a grill placed too close to anything that can burn is a fire hazard. They can be very hot, causing burn injuries. Follow these simple tips and you will be on the way to safe grilling.

SAFETY TIPS

- Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.
- The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.
- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- Never leave your grill unattended.
- Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

CHARCOAL GRILLS

- There are several ways to get the charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel.
- If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use.
- When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container.

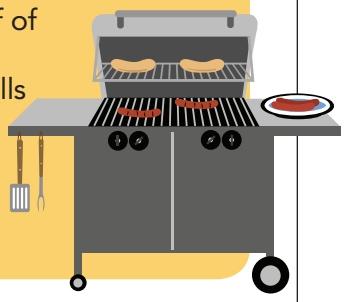
PROPANE Grills

Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles. If your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off both the gas tank and the grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department. **If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department.** Do not move the grill.

If the flame **goes out**, turn the grill and gas off and wait at least **5 minutes** before re-lighting it.

FACTS

- July is the peak month for grill fires.
- Roughly half of the injuries involving grills are thermal burns.



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Smoke Alarms at Home

SMOKE ALARMS ARE A KEY PART of a home fire escape plan. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so you can get outside quickly.

SAFETY TIPS

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom. They should also be outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. Install alarms in the basement.
- Large homes may need extra smoke alarms.
- It is best to use interconnected smoke alarms. When one smoke alarm sounds, they all sound.
- Test all smoke alarms at least once a month. Press the test button to be sure the alarm is working.
- Current alarms on the market employ different types of technology including multi-sensing, which could include smoke and carbon monoxide combined.
- Today's smoke alarms will be more technologically advanced to respond to a multitude of fire conditions, yet mitigate false alarms.
- A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from the stove.
- People who are hard-of-hearing or deaf can use special alarms. These alarms have strobe lights and bed shakers.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.

FACTS

- A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
- Smoke alarms should be installed inside every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level. Smoke alarms should be connected so when one sounds, they all sound. Most homes do not have this level of protection.
- Roughly 3 out of 5 fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

NFPA
NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION
The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards

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fdlbjj.com

848 S. Military Road, Fond du Lac, WI 54935

(920) 517-6129

SABEL MECHANICAL LLC

920-904-5579

Fond Du Lac,WI

W3150 County Road H
Fond du Lac, WI 54937

www.sabelmechanical.com

MILKSPECIALTIES
GLOBAL

7500 Flying Cloud Drive, Suite 500

Eden Prairie, MN 55344 USA

Office: 952.942.7310

Fax: 952.942.7611

www.milkspecialties.com