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# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



**CONTACT:** Scott McLean  
Information Officer  
(916) 651-FIRE (3473)  
[@CALFIRE PIO](mailto:scott.mclean@calfire.ca.gov)

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### **Be Aware – Potential Fires Lurk Throughout Your Home!**

*Look, Listen and Learn as CAL FIRE Rolls Into Fire Prevention Week October 7-13, 2018*

**Sacramento** – Today’s home fires burn faster than ever. In a typical home fire, you may have as little as one to two minutes to escape safely from the time the smoke alarm sounds. Knowing how to use that time takes planning and practice. Although people feel safest in their home, it is also the place people are at greatest risk fire. Over-confidence contributes to a complacency toward home escape planning and practice.

“As Fire Prevention Week comes in, now is the time to take a look around your home and see where your hidden hazards are,” said Dennis Mathisen, California State Fire Marshal. “That means go room by room, really look around closely at where you have items placed, stored, and plugged in. The biggest risks for home fires is in the kitchen. Never leave the kitchen when food is cooking, especially on the burners, and keep a fire extinguisher nearby.”

Smoke alarms are the eyes and ears to alert people to a fire. Smoke alarms can mean the difference between life and death as working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a home fire in half. Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of the home, including the basement. Take the time to plan an escape route for everyone in the home, designating a “meeting spot” outside. What good is an escape route, if no one remembers it? The answer is simple: practice, practice, practice and make it fun! The more often you practice (day and night), the more comfortable your children will be in escaping, and less likely to hide.

Heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fires during the winter months. Space heaters are the type of equipment most often involved in home heating equipment fires. All heaters need space. Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment. Have a three-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters. Purchase and use only portable space heaters listed by a qualified testing laboratory. Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned on a regular basis.

Remember these three easy things when making your home safe:

- **Look** for possible fire hazards in your home and eliminate them. Are your outlets overloaded? Check the circuit loads of your electrical appliances and devices and unplug when not in use. Inspect your appliance cords. If any are torn, ripped, or damaged in any way, replace them immediately. If a cord or plug ever feels hot, unplug it.
- **Listen** for the sound of the smoke alarm. Know that you may have only minutes to get out if a fire starts.
- **Learn** two ways out of every room. Exits should be easy to access and free of clutter. After leaving the home, go to your family’s designated meeting spot that was created when you set up your home fire escape plan.

For more information, visit [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov).

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