

MANAGING RISK: FIRE PREVENTION

The following are some safety measures that property owners and landlords should include in their emergency guide for tenants.

COOKING SAFETY FOR RESIDENTS

- Do not leave cooking unattended on the stove. A serious fire can start in a matter of seconds.
- Keep the stove and oven clean, and avoid grease build up.
- If a fire starts in a pan, turn off the stove and carefully cover the pan with a lid or another pan. Never throw water on the fire!
- Keep children and pets away from the stove while cooking.
- Keep items that can catch fire, such as dishtowels, paper or plastic bags, at least three feet away from the stovetop. Keep loose-fitting clothing away from hot burners.
- Never use the stove or oven to heat your home. Use all cooking equipment according to manufacturer's directions. Don't alter stovetops, burners or backsplashes.

One way to prevent kitchen fires from getting out of control is to install Stove Top Fire Suppression devices in each tenant's kitchen. These devices respond automatically to stovetop fires. What's more, property managers and owners may be able to receive a discount on their apartment building insurance premiums for installing suppression devices.

OUTDOOR GRILLING SAFETY FOR RESIDENTS

- For gas grills, make certain the hose connection is tight and check the hoses for leaks.
- Turn the grill and fuel cylinder off immediately after grilling.
- For charcoal grills, avoid adding lighter fluid after the coals have been lit.
- Always place coals in a metal container with a tight lid after they have cooled for 48 hours.
- Never leave gas or charcoal grills unattended while cooking.
- Always use your grill outdoors and never barbecue in an enclosed area because carbon monoxide can accumulate and be deadly.
- Set-up your grill in an open area at least 10 feet away from buildings, overhead combustible surfaces, dry leaves and brush.

CANDLE SAFETY FOR RESIDENTS

- Always keep burning candles within sight. Extinguish all candles when leaving a room or before going to sleep.
- Use a candleholder specifically designed for candle use. The holder should be heat resistant, sturdy and large enough to contain any drips or melted wax.
- Place lighted candles where they won't be knocked over by children, pets or anyone else. Keep burning candles away from items that can catch on fire such as furniture, drapes, bedding, carpets, books, paper, etc.

HEATING SAFETY FOR RESIDENTS

- Give your heaters space. Do not put anything close to any type of heater.
- Never use an extension cord with a portable heater.
- Never allow any item to drape across heaters.
- Clean or replace furnace filters regularly.
- Make sure your portable heater is tested by an independent testing laboratory and has an automatic shut off feature if it tips over. Turn portable heaters off before leaving the room or before going to bed.
- Inspect all heating equipment yearly and always hire an experienced electrician to do any necessary repair work on your baseboard heaters

SMOKING SAFE FOR RESIDENTS

- As obvious as this, never smoke in bed or when feeling drowsy.
- Keep ashtrays off of sofas or chairs.
- Use deep ashtrays and soak ashes in water before disposal.
- Don't leave cigarettes, cigars or pipes unattended. Put out all smoking materials before you walk away. Do not leave matches or lighters where children can reach them.

CLOTHES DRYER SAFETY FOR RESIDENTS

Each year, there are around 12,700 clothes dryer fires in residential buildings in the U.S, with failure to clean the lint screen the leading factor contributing to these types of fires in apartment buildings.

- Always remove lint from trap before using the clothes dryer.
- Regularly check dryer exhaust vent hoses behind the dryer for lint build up and clean. Bends and lint buildup in hoses can block airflow.
- Never put rubber, plastic, foam or any materials that made contact with flammable liquids in the dryer even if previously washed.
- Never leave dryer running while sleeping or out of the home.

ARSON SAFETY FOR RESIDENTS

- Lock doors and windows of your home and garage.
- Clean up wastepaper, long grass, weeds, litter, or anything that can burn from around buildings.
- Clear carport areas of anything that could fuel a fire.
- Do not allow dumpsters to become overfilled. Arrange for additional dumpsters or take refuse to transfer stations, if required.
- Locate commercial dumpsters and recycling bins at least five feet away from combustible walls and openings of roof eave lines. Use only metal or metal-lined receptacles.
- Place locks on commercial dumpsters, if possible.
- Trim shrubbery away from doors and windows to improve visibility.
- Leave your indoor and outdoor lighting on during hours of darkness.
- Consider installing devices that automatically turn on outdoor lights when they sense darkness or movement outside the home.