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U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
Washington, D.C. 20207

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About the Commission

This Home Fire Safety Checklist was developed by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), an independent regulatory agency of the U.S. Government.

The Commission has four statutory missions:

- to protect the public from unreasonable risks of injury associated with consumer products;
- to assist consumers in evaluating the comparative safety of consumer products;
- to develop uniform safety standards for consumer products and minimize conflicting state and local regulations; and
- to promote research and investigation into the causes and prevention of product-related deaths, injuries and illnesses.

It has jurisdiction over more than 15,000 consumer products used in the home, school and in public places. Among the products not subject to the Commission's authority are food, drugs, automobiles, tobacco, and fire arms. The Commission administers five safety laws: The Consumer Product Safety Act, the Federal Hazardous Substances Act, the Flammable Fabrics Act, the Poison Prevention Packaging Act, and the Refrigerator Act.

CPSC began operation on May 14, 1973. It is headed by three Commissioners appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate.

On October 29, 1973, the Commission instituted a toll-free Hotline to make it easier for consumers to report product-related injuries or potentially hazardous products, and to get information on recalled products seven days a week, 24 hours a day. You may call the Commission's Hotline from anywhere in the continental U.S. by dialing 1-800-638-2772. A teletypewriter for the hearing impaired is also available (including Alaska and Hawaii) on a special Hotline number 1-800-638-8270. To order publications, write to the Office of Information and Public Affairs, Washington, DC 20207.

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Introduction

The United States has one of the highest fire death and injury rates in the world. Fire—in the form of flames and smoke—is the second leading cause of accidental death in the home.

More than 4,000 people die each year in home fires. Every year, there are more than 500,000 residential fires serious enough to be reported to fire departments. More than 90 percent of residential fire deaths and injuries result from fires in one and two family houses and apartments. Property losses exceed 4 billion dollars annually, and the long term emotional damage to victims and their loved ones is incalculable.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has targeted the principal consumer products associated with fires, namely home heating devices, uphol-

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5. The heater is used in well ventilated rooms. ____ ____
 6. The heater is turned off while sleeping
and is never left operating unattended. ____ ____
 7. The heater is placed at least three feet
away from anything that might catch fire
such as clothing, furniture, curtains, etc. ____ ____



Recommendations:

- Never place or store pot holders, plastic utensils, towels

Recommendations:

- Look for furniture designed to reduce the likelihood of furniture fire from cigarettes. Much of the furniture manufactured today has significantly greater resistance to ignition by cigarettes than upholstered furniture manufactured 10 to 15 years ago. This is particularly true of furniture manufactured to comply with the requirements of the Upholstered Furniture Action Council's (UFAC) Voluntary Action Program. Such upholstered furniture may be identified by the gold colored tag on the furniture item. The legend on the front of the tag in red letters states "Important Consumer Safety Information from UFAC."
- Always check the furniture where smokers have been sitting for improperly discarded smoking materials. Ashes and lighted cigarettes can fall unnoticed behind or between cushions or under furniture.
- Do not place or leave ashtrays on the arms of chairs where they can be knocked off.



• The manufacturer of this furniture certifies that it is made in accordance with the new, improved UFAC methods, designed to reduce the likelihood of furniture fire from cigarettes. However, upholstery fires are still possible.

• Some materials used in upholstery, when ignited, will burn rapidly and emit toxic gases. Remember to practice careful smoking habits. For early warning, equip your home with properly placed smoke detectors and maintain them regularly.

Mattresses and Bedding

Smoldering fires in mattresses and bedding materials caused by cigarettes are a major cause of deaths in residential fires. In 1989 over 35,000 mattress/bedding fires caused about 700 deaths.

You should be able to respond "yes" to the following safety statements.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
1. "No smoking in bed" is a rule that is practiced in my home.	___	___
2. Heaters, ash trays, smoking materials and other fire sources are located away from bedding.	___	___

Recommendations:

- **DO NOT** smoke in bed. Smoking in bed is a major cause of accidental fire deaths in homes.
- Locate heaters or other fire sources three feet from the bed to prevent the bed catching on fire.
- Consider replacing your old mattress with a new one if you are a smoker. Mattresses manufactured since 1973 are required to resist cigarette ignition.



Wearing Apparel

Most fibers used in clothing can burn, some more quickly than others. A significant number of clothing fires occur in the over 65 age group principally from nightwear

- Look for fabrics made predominantly from thermo-plastic fibers (nylon, polyester, acrylic, olefin) because they resist ignition by burning cigarettes better than cellulosic fabrics (rayon or cotton). In general, the higher the thermoplastic content, the greater the resistance to cigarette ignition.

Small open flames, including matches, cigarette lighters, and candles are the major sources of clothing ignition.

Early Warning and Escape

Even when you have complied with every item in this Home Fire Safety Checklist, you still need to have a plan for early warning and escape in case a fire does occur.

Many fire deaths and fire injuries are actually caused by smoke and gases. Victims inhale smoke and poisonous gases that rise ahead of the fire.

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