About 3,500 Americans die each year in fires and about 20,000 are injured. You can stop the fire before it starts. Use this fact sheet to learn how to prevent a fire in your home and know what to do if you have a fire.

Stop a fire caused by careless smoking, before it starts:

- The safest place to smoke is outside of the home. Use a sturdy ashtray or a can filled with sand to collect ashes.
- Use ashtrays with a wide, stable base that are hard to tip over. If it wobbles, it won’t work.
- Ashtrays should be set on something sturdy and hard to ignite, like a table.
- Put It Out. All the Way. Every Time. The cigarette really needs to be completely stubbed out in the ashtray.
- Soak cigarette butts and ashes in water before throwing them away NEVER toss hot cigarette butts or ashes in the trash.
- Chairs and sofas catch on fire fast and burn fast. Don’t put ashtrays on them. If people have been smoking in the home, check for cigarettes under cushions.
- NEVER smoke while using oxygen or anywhere near an oxygen source, even if the source is turned off. Oxygen makes any fire burn hotter and faster.
- If you smoke, use reduced ignition strength cigarettes, commonly referred to as “fire-safe cigarettes.”
- If you are drowsy or falling asleep, put it out. Smoking in bed is just plain wrong.
- Close a matchbook before striking and hold it away from your body. Set your lighter on “low” flame.

Be prepared for a fire:

- One of the best ways to protect yourself and your family is to have a working smoke alarm that can sound fast for both a fire that has flames, and a smoky fire that has fumes without flames. It is called a “Dual Sensor Smoke Alarm.” A smoke alarm greatly reduces your chances of dying in a fire.
- Prepare an escape plan and practice it often. Make sure everyone in your family knows at least two (2) escape routes from their bedrooms.

Visit www.usfa.dhs.gov/smoking to view the U.S. Fire Administration’s Smoking & Home Fires Campaign and to order campaign materials.