



CAUTION

FIRE DANGERS

Home Fires

As a new home owner you are going to be responsible for preventive maintenance duties that may have previously been maintained by someone else. Fire is always the biggest **risk** and we want you to be **safe** and enjoy your home for a very long time. We have compiled the most common mistakes new home owners make that can lead to a very dangerous situation for you and your family.



- Danger of Rags
- Electric Blankets
- Dryer Lint Buildup
- Light Bulb Wattage
- Extension Cords
- Dangers of Dust
- Storing Batteries
- Uninvited Guest
- Chimney Sweep
- Range Hood

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A wood stain can bestow the perfect finishing touch on a DIY furniture project. But later on, that pile of oil-soaked rags you tossed in the corner could trigger the perfect storm: Left unattended, those rags are a very real fire hazard, as they could oxidize and spontaneously combust, causing a house fire. To dispose of oily rags properly, place them in a metal can that's been filled with water, and cover it with a tight-fitting lid, or lay them flat outside to dry.

DIRTY RAGS

A warm and cozy electric blanket is a welcome comfort in the cold of winter, but it also poses a potential fire hazard if used improperly. Never allow pets to snuggle up on top, and don't pile extra covers over the electric blanket, because excessive heat buildup may lead to fire. Keep your electric blanket at its lowest setting, never bend the coils, and always turn it off in the morning.

ELEC. BLANKET



Neglecting Appliance Recalls, During the last decade, home appliances caused an estimated 150,000 fires each year, and a significant number of these were caused by defective appliances. To keep on top of recalls and prevent disaster in your home, register your appliance with the manufacturer or go to www.recalls.gov to find out if any of your models are on the list.

RECALLS

We all know that emptying the lint screen increases your dryer's efficiency, but did you know that lint is also flammable? Mixing excessive heat with lint buildup is a recipe for disaster. Clean the dryer vent and exhaust duct regularly, as well as the interior of the dryer frame, to clear away lint and clogs, and reduce the risk of fire

DRYER LINT





If you own a laptop, you know how hot it can get. When you leave your computer on your bed, couch, rug, or other soft, flammable surface, you run the risk of restricting airflow through the cooling vents, which can cause your laptop to overheat and possibly catch fire. To prevent fires, keep your laptop on a desk or table instead. The same is true for cellular phones, for example one app that tracks your sleep, asks you to place the phone under your pillow until many phones caught on fire.

ELECTRONICS

If you've ever thought to yourself, "It's probably OK to use this 60-watt bulb in a 40-watt socket," you're not alone. You are, however, putting your home at risk. Installing a light bulb with a wattage that is too high for a lamp or light fixture is a leading cause of electrical fires. Always check the light fixture's maximum wattage, and never go over the recommended rating.

WRONG WATTAGE



Extension cords are meant to be a temporary response to a lack of electrical outlets, not a permanent solution. This is why: Connecting a large number of cords for a significant amount of time can cause an overload that leads to a short circuit—which could ignite a fire. If you need additional outlets, hire a qualified electrician to install them, and you'll avoid this problem altogether.

EXT. CORDS

Americans will spend about \$200 billion this year fixing up their homes, and nearly a fifth of this expense will go toward DIY projects. But jobs involving electrical wiring, plumbing, and HVAC units should never be completed without a qualified professional, because gas leaks and electrical sparks resulting from improper installation are a common cause of house fires. Don't put your home and your family at risk by attempting these dangerous DIYs on your own—hire a licensed professional instead.

DIYS





Believe it or not, built-up dust can be a fire hazard if it collects in and around electronics, electrical sockets, and even floor heaters. By vacuuming on a regular basis, especially behind your electronics, you'll significantly reduce the likelihood that particles of dust will catch fire due to prolonged exposure to heat sources

DUST

If you store 9-volt batteries in your kitchen junk drawer, you may be putting your home at risk. When loose batteries roll around with other metals, such as screws or paper clips, the two terminals could short out and generate enough heat to ignite nearby flammables. Put a piece of electrical tape over the terminals, or store the batteries in their original packaging to prevent this possibility

BATTERIES



Mice and other rodents like to gnaw on electrical wires to control the length of their teeth. Over time, they can remove the sheathing, leaving the wires exposed. Unfortunately, the electric current that travels through the wire generates heat, and in the absence of sheathing this could lead to sparks caused by short circuits, which in turn could ignite the surrounding surfaces. If you suspect a rodent infestation, call a professional exterminator immediately

UNINVITED GUEST

Dead birds, raccoon nests, cracked mortar, and built-up creosote are all common causes of chimney fires. The National Fire Protection Association recommends scheduling a professional chimney sweep at least once a year to ensure the safe operation of the chimney. And when you're building a fire in your fireplace, always light it with an approved fire starter—never kerosene. The consequences could be disastrous.

CHIMNEY



RANGE HOOD

While ovens and cooktops are the most common sources of kitchen fires, range hoods also pose a potential threat. Over time, grease that has built up on the vent hood filter can drip down onto the cooktop, possibly igniting a fire. From there, the flames could easily reach your cabinets, and before you know it, your kitchen could be consumed by fire. Don't let this happen to you! Regularly clean and maintain your range hood to keep your kitchen out of harm's way.



FURNITURE

If your furniture is too close to your wood stove, it could spontaneously ignite. Pyrolysis, a chemical decomposition of a combustible item, occurs when an object (say, a sofa) is continually exposed to a heat source (a wood stove) and eventually dries out. This leading yet seldom-considered cause of structural fires does not require a direct flame; all it takes is heat and time for ignition to occur.

