



Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

Protect Your Home from Fires



Every year, thousands of homes are destroyed by fires. Fortunately, you can take steps to prevent fire outbreaks and keep your family and belongings safe by using a combination of fireproofing and fire protection.

Fireproofing usually refers to the materials used in construction, finishes or furnishings that limit a fire's spread. Fire protection covers the active steps to prevent a fire or at least keep damage to a minimum. The fire protection tips below can be used in any home.



Install smoke detectors

Smoke detectors are essential in every home and are your first line of defense against fires. They can detect smoke and alert you before a fire gets out of control, giving you enough time to evacuate. Ensure you have smoke detectors on every level of your home and in every bedroom. Test them regularly to ensure they're working.



Check your wiring

Faulty electrical wiring is a leading cause of house fires. Have a licensed electrician inspect your wiring and ensure it's up to code. Also, avoid overloading your outlets with too many devices and switch off appliances when not in use. Additionally, avoid running cords under rugs or carpets.



Be mindful of appliances

Your household appliances, such as dishwashers, washing machines and dryers, can cause fires if

used incorrectly. Clean the lint filters in your dryer regularly to reduce the risk of a fire starting. Also, avoid leaving appliances unattended or running them overnight.



Manage flammables

Be mindful of flammable items in your home, such as curtains, carpets and upholstery. Keep flammable items away from heaters, stoves and open flames. Store combustible chemicals in their appropriate containers and away from heat sources.



Own a fire extinguisher

A fire extinguisher can buy you critical time to put out a fire before it gets out of control. Place a fire extinguisher in your kitchen and other high-risk areas near your furnace or electrical panel. Learn how to use a fire extinguisher beforehand to deploy it quickly during a fire emergency.

Installing a Dimmer Switch

If you feel like the lighting in your home is too bright or too harsh, installing a dimmer switch can help create a more comfortable and customizable atmosphere.

1

Select the correct switch

You must select a dimmer compatible with the type of bulbs used in the fixture. For example, LED bulbs require LED dimmers because they work on DC current. Compact fluorescent light (CFL), halogen and incandescent dimmers are best suited to those individual bulb types.

2

Turn off the power

Locate the circuit breaker box and find the switch for the room where you plan to install the dimmer switch. Turn off the power to that circuit. Use a noncontact voltage tester to ensure the power is off before you begin.

3

Remove the old switch

Use a screwdriver to remove the screws that hold the old switch in place. Carefully pull out the switch from the electrical box and take note of the wire configuration for later.

4

Connect the dimmer switch wires

The dimmer switch should come with a manual that illustrates its wire setup. Typically, the black wire is your hot wire, the white is your neutral wire and the green is your ground wire.

5

Install the dimmer switch

Carefully tuck the wires into the electrical box and screw the switch mounts into place. Turn on the power and test your new dimmer switch. If it doesn't work, double-check that the wiring is correct and that the switch is securely mounted.

What To Do if Your House Floods



Navigating the aftermath of a flood is challenging and stressful. This guide offers essential tips for what to do in the unfortunate event of a house flood.

Stop water flow: Identify and stop the source of water to prevent further damage to your home. Turn off the main valve if it's a non-natural flood. Locating this valve before problems arise will save time when you need to shut it off quickly.

Evacuate safely: In the case of a sewage leak or burst pipe, evacuate everyone to a safe, dry area outside. If the flooding is caused by a weather event, follow local news or authorities for temporary shelter information.

Turn off power: After stopping water flow and ensuring everyone is safe, turn off all electrical systems

to eliminate potential safety hazards. Avoid water contact when accessing the fuse box and call a professional if you need help.

Seek assistance: Once you've cut the electricity, contact your insurance company to initiate the claims process and determine whether they expect you to wait for an adjuster before beginning cleanup and repairs.

Document damage/cleanup: Prior to cleaning or repairing anything, use your phone to thoroughly document any home damage for insurance purposes. When cleaning, be cautious and wear protective gear to protect yourself from any potentially hazardous material in floodwater.

In addition, always remember to stay updated on local news reports, follow the guidance of emergency services for accurate, current information during flood conditions and dial 911 for any medical emergencies.



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