

DO YOUR OWN HOME FIRE INSPECTION

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

- ❑ Warn children about the dangers of matches and fire.
- ❑ **Keep matches and lighters up high out of the reach of children.**
- ❑ **Never smoke in bed, designate an area outside your home.**
- ❑ Old papers, magazines and cloth items should be stored away from heat and checked regularly, if they are no longer needed, dispose of them.
- ❑ Empty your waste cans regularly.
- ❑ Handle and store Christmas lights and decorations with care.
- ❑ **Never leave candles unattended, always use a glass globe to surround the flame.**
- ❑ Keep upholstered furniture and curtains away from electrical appliances, stoves, heaters, fireplaces and candles.

HEATER, FURNACE, FIREPLACE and CHIMNEYS

- ❑ Make sure the furnace is in good repair and inspected once a year.
- ❑ Flue pipes and chimneys should be clean with no loose connections free of defects and properly installed and inspected a minimum of every two years.
- ❑ Wood burning, gas and electric heaters should be properly installed and used according to manufacturer's instructions and inspected once a year.
- ❑ Fire in a fireplace should never be left unattended, put out before going to bed and always have a spark screen in place while in use.
- ❑ **Ashes from furnace, stove or fireplace should be stored in metal cans, not in cartons or boxes or in ash piles. Always store ashes outside away from buildings even when you think they are out. Never vacuum a fireplace unless there is nothing more than a coating of fine dust.**

ELECTRICAL

- ❑ Appliances clean, free from oil, dust, lint (especially cloths dryers' electric and gas).
Clean your lint trap in your dryer after every load and your ventilation system to the exterior of the dwelling once a year. If the dryer is heating up but clothes won't dry, your ventilation system is probably blocked. Stop using your dryer until the problem is corrected.
When drying clothes especially kitchen towels with oily stains don't stop the dryer mid-cycle. Dryers have cool down time at the end of each cycle which keeps clothes or towels from overheating and spontaneously igniting. If you must stop the dryer mid cycle spread the contents out on

top of the dryer and on the door, leave the door open.

- ❑ Unplug small appliances after each use, put away only when cold and keep in good repair (curling irons are often left on).
- ❑ **Do not leave your dishwasher running when you leave the house. Always unlatch the door when not in use. You can push the door closed but leave it unlatched. Detergents and water are corrosive and the wiring and heating elements can break down over time. Latching the door completes the electrical circuit which will allow for a short to occur and cause a fire.**
- ❑ Do not use electrical cords that are brittle or damaged. Make sure plugs are in good condition.
- ❑ Make sure outlets are not overloaded.
- ❑ Replace surge protectors that are ten or more years old or show damage. Never plug one surge protector into another. Never cover surge protectors with papers or debris as this will cause overheating.
- ❑ Anything that heats or cools must be plugged directly into an outlet.
- ❑ Electric cords and extension cords should be treated gently, never yanked out of an outlet. If cords become brittle and no longer pliable dispose of them. Old lamps and any older appliances should be checked for this condition.
- ❑ Never place electric cords under rugs or over nails.
- ❑ Wiring should be adequate for needs and checked by an electrician if you are having blown fuses or frequent tripping of circuit breakers, slow heating appliances, dimming lights or shrinking television pictures.

COOKING AND FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS

- ❑ Make sure your stove is clean and free of grease.
- ❑ Never leave cooking unattended.
- ❑ Do not wear long loose sleeves while cooking.
- ❑ Keep pot handles turned in towards the back of the stove.
- ❑ Do not allow appliance cords to hang over the edge of a counter.
- ❑ **When discarding oily rags especially ones containing linseed oil which is highly combustible put them in a capped metal container with water. If linseed rags are simply left in the open air after use they can still catch fire.**
- ❑ Store all combustible liquids in a labeled capped metal container away from heat. A metal cabinet is preferable for such storage.
- ❑ Never smoke when using flammable or combustible substances.

OTHER THINGS YOU NEED TO DO IN YOUR HOME

Make sure you have properly installed and maintained smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers.

Do a home fire drill and know two ways out of every room in your home.

Check your home for fire safety each night before going to bed.

If your home catches fire “get out and stay out”. Crawl low under smoke, if your cloths catch fire “stop drop and roll”. Call 911 from outside your home. Have a meeting place and tell the first emergency responder you see if someone is left inside.

More information concerning fire safety is available at The Bernards Township Fire Prevention Office 277 South Maple Avenue Basking Ridge NJ 07920.

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