



Fire and Life Safety Bulletin

April 2010

804-646-6640



RICHMOND FIRE
SINCE 1858

Spring Cleaning the Safe Way

In the spring, people often like to clean their homes. It's a great thing to do! But it's important to stay safe while you're doing it, especially from falls and poisoning – two of the top causes of home injuries.

- When cleaning out closets or re-organizing things, always keep stairs, steps, landings and all floors clear.
- Carry loads you can see over, and keep one hand free to hold banisters and railings.
- Five gallon buckets are often used while cleaning and present a serious drowning danger to young children. Never leave a bucket or any standing water unattended and store buckets empty and upside-down.



-  When you clean out your cabinets, look at the labels on the products. If you see the words “*Caution,*” “*Warning,*” “*Danger,*” “*Poison,*” or “*Keep Out of Reach of Children,*” these products should be locked up when not in use.
- Follow safety recommendations when using harsh products, such as wearing gloves and masks. Do not mix products together because their contents could react with dangerous results.
- Remember to put things away so people cannot trip on them. Safely tuck away telephone and electrical cords out of walkways. In homes with children, make sure toys and other items are always safely put away when not in use.
- Never use gasoline to clean something in tiny quantities. Gasoline vapors approved container, keeping it  and never use or store gasoline in your home, even can explode with just a spark. Store gasoline in an outside the house.
- If you need to climb to clean something, use a stepladder or ladder. When using a ladder, stand at or below the highest safe standing level. For a stepladder, the safe standing level is the second rung from the top; for an extension ladder, it's the fourth rung from the top. Before using, make sure the extension ladder rungs are dry.

How to Handle a Kitchen Fire—Most home fires begin in the kitchen. Stay near the stove whenever you are cooking something – especially when frying. Keep your stove and oven clean.

- If you have a small pan fire on the stove, put on an oven mitt.
- Carefully slide a cookie sheet over the pan. A lid can also be used. This cuts off the oxygen and allows the fire to go down.
- Turn off the heat at the burner.
- Leave the pan covered and in place. Do not try to move it!
- Let the pan cool down before you take away the cookie sheet or lid.



Living with Home Fire Sprinklers

Nearly 400,000 home fires occur every year in the United States with over 3,000 people dying annually. Residential fire sprinklers are a proven way to protect lives and property against fires. Here are some myths and true facts about fire sprinkler systems for residential property.

Myth- "Home fire sprinklers make housing unaffordable, especially for first time buyers."

Fact—The fact is home fire sprinklers are affordable. The Fire Protection Research Foundation recently revealed that the cost of installing home fire sprinklers averages \$1.61 per square foot for new construction. To put the cost into perspective, many people pay similar amounts for carpet upgrades, paving a stone driveway or a whirlpool bath.

Myth- "Home fire sprinklers often leak or activate accidentally."

Fact— Home fire sprinkler systems are much like home plumbing systems; when installed and maintained properly, there is very low risk of leaks. Each individual sprinkler is designed and calibrated to activate only when it senses a significant heat change, directing water to the area of the fire.

Myth- "A home fire sprinkler system requires frequent, expensive maintenance."

Fact— The standard design for home fire sprinklers is much simpler than the design for more traditional sprinklers like the ones used in commercial buildings. If you install a home fire sprinkler system, the only "inspection and maintenance" you will need is to (a) walk around your home and make sure the sprinklers are not obstructed by something that would block the water coming out, and (b) avoid turning off the main control valve, which you don't normally operate anyway.

Myth- "The water damage caused by the sprinkler system will be more extensive than fire damage."

Fact— Home fire sprinklers can significantly reduce property loss and damage due to a fire. The sprinkler will quickly control the heat and smoke from the fire, limiting damage to other areas of the house, giving residents valuable time to get out safely. Any resulting water damage from the sprinkler will be much less severe than the damage caused by water from firefighting hose lines.

Myth- "When a fire occurs, every sprinkler will activate and everything in the house will be ruined."

Fact— In the event of a fire, only the sprinkler closest to the fire will activate, spraying water directly on the fire, leaving the rest of the house dry and secure. Ninety percent of the time, fires are contained by the operation of just one sprinkler.

Myth- "A smoke alarm provides enough protection."

Fact— Smoke alarms alert occupants to the presence of danger, but do nothing to extinguish the fire. Fire sprinkler systems respond quickly to reduce heat, flames and smoke, giving residents valuable time to get out safely. If you have a reported fire in your home, the risk of dying decreases by about 80% when sprinklers are present.



Over 72% of all fatal boating accident victims drowned; of those, 90% of the victims were not wearing a life jacket.

Do your part and WEAR IT!

The Richmond Fire Department stands ready to assist you in many ways other than emergency situations. Most importantly, we will provide you and your family with a free smoke alarm; including installation. If you just need a battery or want us to check the condition of your present smoke alarm, we will provide that service for free as well. Also, we will be happy to conduct a free home safety survey....with no strings attached. We are concerned with your safety and that of your family.

Call the Metro Smoke Detector Hotline at 1-888-537-5967 for any of these free services. Lives depend on it.