

CITY OF COTTAGE GROVE  
HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST



Make Your Home A  
**SAFE HAVEN**

[COTTAGEGROVEMN.GOV/FIREEMS](http://COTTAGEGROVEMN.GOV/FIREEMS)

Dear Neighbor,

Every home should be a Safe Haven – where you and your family are safe from fire and common household hazards. There are things that you can do to help make your home a Safe Haven.

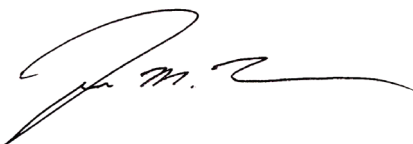
The Cottage Grove Fire Department wants to help you make your home a Safe Haven. We offer this program so we can prevent fires, accidents, injuries and deaths in your home. While we spend thousands of hours every year preparing to fight fires and respond to emergencies, we believe any preventable loss, injury or death, is a tragedy. Our goal is to make every home a Safe Haven to prevent losses that may occur because of fire and household accidents.

To support you in making your home a Safe Haven, invite our firefighters to come to your home to offer life-saving education, develop a home fire escape plan and perform a home safety check with you. With our visit, we will provide you with life-saving tools such as free smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms and Stovetop® fire extinguishers. Our firefighters will even install the alarms for you!

We look forward to serving you, and helping you make your home a Safe Haven for you and your family.

Sincerely,

**Jon Pritchard**, Fire Chief  
JPritchard@CottageGroveMN.gov



*The Cottage Grove Fire Department's Safe Haven Program is funded through a generous grant from the FEMA FY2022 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program.*

## THE MOST DEADLY FIRES HAPPEN WHEN PEOPLE ARE ASLEEP.

### Safety Practices

Here are six safety practices you can incorporate into your home to keep your family safe from fire.

- 1 Are there at least two ways out of each sleeping area in case of fire or other emergency?
- 2 Have you developed a fire escape plan and practiced an at-home fire drill with your family?
- 3 Does everyone in your home know to stay low when going outside of the home to escape fire?
- 4 Do you have an outdoor meeting place that is a permanent location near or in front of the home?
- 5 Does everyone in your home know to quickly get out of the home and stay out if there is a fire?
- 6 Are your house numbers at least 4" tall and easily seen from the street so responders can find your home?

Questions? We're here to answer them!

**FirePrevention@CottageGroveMN.gov**  
CottageGroveMN.gov | (651) 458-2858

# GENERAL SAFETY

## Smoke and Carbon Monoxide

A majority of home fire deaths happen in homes with no working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms should be placed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home.

Carbon monoxide alarms should be within 10 feet of the entrance to each room used for sleeping.

If a carbon monoxide or smoke alarm sounds, get out and call 9-1-1.

	YES	NO
Do you have a working smoke alarm on each level and in all sleeping areas?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you tested the alarm in the last month or as recommended by the manufacturer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you replaced the battery within the last year? (Some smoke alarms are now equipped with a sealed 10-year life battery and only need to be tested.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are your smoke alarms less than 10 years old?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does everyone in your home, including visitors, know what to do when the smoke alarm sounds?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Carbon monoxide alarms are required in every Minnesota home/apartment, and should be located within 10 feet of the entrance to each room used for sleeping. They can be located either on the ceiling or the wall. Replace carbon monoxide alarms according to the manufacture guidelines (usually 5-7 years). If the carbon monoxide alarm sounds, immediately go outside and call 9-1-1.

	YES	NO
Do you have a working carbon monoxide alarm located within 10 feet of each sleeping area?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is your carbon monoxide alarm within its expiration date?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does everyone in your home, including visitors, know what to do when the carbon monoxide alarm sounds?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# HEATING SAFETY

Heating equipment is a leading cause of home fires. Never use the oven or stove to heat your home.

## Fireplace Safety *(wood burning and gas)*

	YES	NO
If you have a fireplace, does it have a child safety screen? (Most gas fireplace manufactures offer retrofitted safety screens for older models)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you had your chimney professionally cleaned in the last year?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you wet the discarded ashes, place them in a metal container and store them in a safe area?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you only burn clean dry wood in the fireplace?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Was your gas fireplace installed by a licensed professional?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you know how to turn off the gas to the fireplace?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is your gas fireplace equipped with an oxygen-depletion sensor?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you had your gas fireplace cleaned and serviced in the last year?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Furnace and Water Heater Safety

	YES	NO
Have you had your furnace and water heater serviced by a professional in the last year?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you change your furnace filter regularly?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you keep items that can burn at least three feet away from your furnace and water heater?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does everyone in your home know what to do if they smell natural gas? (If you smell natural gas in your home, do not turn on lights, use electrical items or a landline telephone. Get outside and call 9-1-1 from a safe location.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Portable Space Heaters

YES NO

Are all of your electric space heaters UL Solutions approved and plugged directly into an outlet?

Do you keep your space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn?

Do you turn off your space heaters whenever you leave the room or go to sleep?

Are flammable liquids, such as gasoline, stored in safety containers in a garage or shed outside? (Never store gasoline in the house)

Are matches and lighters kept out of sight and out of reach of children?

Do you know that the Fire Department offers a free program for children who play with fire? For information on the program, call **(651) 458-2858**.

## FIRE HAZARDS

**Smoking** *is the leading cause of fatal fires.*

YES NO

If someone at your home smokes, do they smoke outside, away from the home?

Do smokers use deep, wide and sturdy ashtrays?

If medical oxygen is used in your home, do you prohibit smoking?

Do you empty your ash trays regularly and soak all smoking materials with water before putting them in the trash?

**Candles** *are a leading cause of fire in the home.*

YES NO

Do you use sturdy candle holders that will not tip over easily?

Do you keep candles at least 12" away from anything that can burn?

Do you blow out candles whenever you leave the room or go to bed?

If a candle must burn continuously for religious reasons, do you make sure it is enclosed in a glass container and placed on a metal tray or in a basin of water?

## HOME FEATURES

**Doors** *Keep doors closed in your home to slow the spread of fire.*

YES NO

Do you sleep with bedroom doors closed?

Are the doors in your home free from damage such as holes, cracks and missing panels?

Are all the door knobs, locks, hinges and other hardware in good working condition so they close securely and are easy to use in an emergency.

**Windows** *are an important part of your home, and provide more than just light.*

YES NO

Does every sleeping area have an emergency escape window or second door?

Are emergency escape windows able to be easily opened? (Not screwed or painted shut)

Is everyone in your home able to operate all emergency escape windows?

If young children are in the home, is the area around windows clear of items they can climb on? Screens will not stop a child from falling out of a window.

## Garage, Shed and Storage Units

YES NO

If you have an attached garage, is the drywall between the garage and home free from damage?

Are flammable liquids (such as gasoline) stored in approved safety containers in the garage or shed? Never store gasoline in the house.

Is gasoline-fueled equipment stored outside of the home, in a garage or shed?

Do you keep flammables (such as automotive chemicals, varnish and paint strippers) in a closed metal cabinet, away from heat sources?

Do you clean up leaking or spilled automotive fluids?

Do you plug charging appliances (such as bases for battery powered tools) directly into a wall outlet?

## Clothes Dryer

**DRYER LINT IS EXTREMELY FLAMMABLE.** Clean your lint trap after every use.

YES NO

Was your clothes dryer installed by a professional?

Do you clean your clothes dryer lint trap after every use?

Do you vacuum behind and beneath your clothes dryer regularly?

Do you clean your clothes dryer ducting to the exterior every year?

Is your clothes dryer connected to ridged duct work that is free from dents or restrictions?

## Fire Extinguishers *provide an additional layer of safety.*

Home fire extinguishers are a safe and effective way to extinguish small fires. To use a fire extinguisher, remember the word “PASS”: Pull the pin, Aim at the base of the fire, Squeeze the extinguisher handle, Sweep the nozzle back and forth. Call 9-1-1 whenever you use a fire extinguisher.

	YES	NO
Do you have fire extinguishers in your home?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are the fire extinguishers in your home easily accessible? (The preferred location is mounted on a wall near the exits).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you know how to use the fire extinguisher in your home?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you inspect your fire extinguishers monthly to ensure they are properly charged, the pin is in place and the nozzle is clear?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Lithium Ion Batteries

	YES	NO
Do you only purchase devices that have been inspected by an independent testing laboratory (such as UL Solutions)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is the device free from damage and wear?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you always use the charging device supplied by the manufacturer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you only charge lithium ion batteries on hard, non-flammable surfaces? Never charge a device under a pillow, on a bed or couch.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you keep your lithium ion batteries at room temperature? Never place the batteries in direct sunlight or inside a hot vehicle.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you take your lithium ion batteries to be properly recycled?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## DID YOU KNOW?

Home fire sprinkler systems are the best way to protect your family in the event of a fire. Most home fires are controlled or extinguished by a single sprinkler head. Home fire sprinklers use much less water than firefighters using a hose. Remember, your possessions dry out but nothing un-burns.

If you are remodeling or building a new home, insist upon a life-saving fire sprinkler system. For more information, please visit [HomeFireSprinklers.org](http://HomeFireSprinklers.org).

## KITCHEN SAFETY

**Indoor Cooking Fires** *are the leading cause of home fires and fire injuries.*

Your best way to prevent cooking fires is to “STAY AND LOOK WHEN YOU COOK.” Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen, even for a short time, turn off the stove. Many fires start in the kitchen from frying foods. You can lower the risk of a fire by using a fryer with a thermostat control that shuts off when the contents get too hot. If you do have a fire on your stove, the safest way to extinguish it is to leave the pan on the stove, slide a tight fitting lid over the pot, turn the burner off and call 9-1-1. DO NOT ADD WATER! If the fire is too large or unsafe, get outside and call 9-1-1.

	YES	NO
Do you stay in the kitchen while cooking?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are paper towels, hot pads, dish towels or other items that may burn, kept at least three feet away from the stove?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are hot liquids (such as coffee) and hot foods placed out of the reach of children?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are back burners used for cooking and are pot handles turned inward?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is the microwave properly used and is food tested for temperature before being eaten?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you tie back hair and remove loose fitting clothing that may catch on fire before cooking?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you keep children and pets at least three feet away from the stove?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have stove knob covers to prevent pets and small children from turning on the stove?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Outdoor Cooking *presents a different set of hazards.*

Gas, charcoal, wood and pellet grills, smokers and griddles must be used outdoors. Never use gasoline to start a grill. Whenever you use an outdoor cooking device, keep it a safe distance away from combustibles, including siding, decking and railings.

	YES	NO
Do you keep your grill clean and free from grease build-up?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you use charcoal lighter fluid correctly by soaking cold, unlit coals before lighting them?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you place the grill at a safe distance away from anything that can burn before igniting the coals, wood or propane? (Typically, 5 feet or more)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are children and pets kept at least three feet away from hot grills?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you dispose of your used coals in a metal container with a lid that you kept outside and away from your home, garage or shed?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you allow your grill to cool completely before covering or bringing it into a shed or garage for storage?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you read and understand the operating instructions for your individual outdoor cooking appliances?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## BATHROOM SAFETY

The bathroom has many risks that can be reduced. 140°F water will cause a first degree burn in less than 5 seconds. Electric appliances such as hair dryers, curling irons and radios pose an electrocution hazard if they come into contact with water. Spilled water and rugs without a rubber backing can lead to injuries.

	YES	NO
Is the hot water heater set under 120°F to prevent burns or injury?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are electrical appliances (curling irons, hair dryers, space heaters and radios) kept away from water and unplugged after each use?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you keep hot appliances such as curling irons and flat irons out of the reach of children and allow them to cool before putting them away?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are the outlets in your bathroom equipped with a Ground Fault Interrupter (GFI)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

YES NO

Does the bathtub and shower have non-skid strips or a non-slip mat?

Do all your rugs and mats have a non-slip backing?

## CHILD SAFETY

**PREVENT INJURIES TO CHILDREN.** Be aware of hazards and habits that pose an increased risk of choking, suffocation, strangulation and other injuries to children. Many childhood injuries can be prevented.

YES NO

Are windows and sliding doors locked to keep children from falling out?

Are cordless window shades used? For information on window shade safety, please visit **WindowCoverings.org**.

Are plastic bags, balloons, small pieces of food, small objects, small toys and other choking hazards out of the reach of children?

Does the babysitter or caregiver know what to do in the event of an emergency?

## Crib Safety

Make sure your child's crib is safe. Many older model cribs increase a child's risk of suffocation and strangulation. For more information on crib safety, please visit **CPSC.gov/SafeSleep**.

YES NO

Is the baby always placed on their back to sleep?

Does the baby always sleep alone in a safe crib-type bed?

Is the crib mattress firm and does it fit snugly?

Does the crib slats spacing meet current safety guidelines?

Is the baby's bed free of pillows, soft fluffy blankets, bumper pads, quilts, comforters and stuffed toys?

## Poisonous Items

**YOUR HOME HAS MANY ITEMS THAT ARE POISONOUS.** Most poisonings occur in the home. Lead paint, plants, medication and cleaning materials are all items you may have that are poisonous.

	YES	NO
Is your home free of any chipping or peeling paint? (Children can be poisoned by lead paint.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are laundry soap and dishwasher detergent pods kept out of the reach of small children or in a locked cabinet?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have locks on the cabinets where you store your household cleaners and other hazardous items?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you keep all medication and vitamins out of the reach of children or in a locked cabinet?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you keep button batteries out of reach of children? (These batteries are often used in items such as remote controls, watches, decorations, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you keep magnets out of the reach of small children? (Magnets can injure children when they are swallowed and become attached to each other.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is the poison control number posted near telephones and programmed into your mobile phone? <b>1 (800) 222-1222</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Drowning** is a leading cause of death for children under the age of five.

	YES	NO
Is standing water such as ditches, kiddie pools and five gallon buckets inaccessible to unsupervised children?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If you have a home swimming pool, is there a fence at least four feet tall with self-closing and latching gates surrounding the entire pool?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is there a responsible adult supervising swimmers, that knows what to do in a water emergency? (CPR and basic water rescue skills)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does everyone in your home wear a life-jacket when boating?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Gun Safety *is the responsibility of every gun owner.*

If you do keep guns in the home, make sure you teach young children about firearm safety.

YES NO

If you have guns in the home, do you keep them unloaded and locked using a child-resistant gun lock?

If you have guns in your home, do you keep all firearms and ammunition in a locked secure cabinet?

If you have guns in the home, do you keep the keys or combinations for gun cabinets and locks in a safe location that is inaccessible to children?

## Car Seat Safety

Many car seats are installed incorrectly. Children under the age of 8 must ride in a car seat or booster. It is recommended that all children remain in a car seat or booster until they are at least 4' 9" or taller. It is also recommended they stay in the backseat until they are at least 12 years old. For more information on car seat safety, please visit: [DPS.MN.gov/Divisions/OTS/Child-Passenger-Safety](https://DPS.MN.gov/Divisions/OTS/Child-Passenger-Safety).

YES NO

Does everyone in the home wear seatbelts while riding in motor vehicles?

Are age-appropriate car seats used when children are riding in motor vehicles?

Are your child safety seats within their expiration date?

Are the child safety seats installed according to vehicle and manufacturer recommendations?

*Cottage Grove Fire Department offers free child safety seat checks and installation.*

## FALL PREVENTION *for older adults and those at risk for falling.*

**FALLS ARE A LEADING CAUSE OF INJURY.** While anyone can be injured from a fall in the home, older adults are at an increased risk for serious injury or death. Each year, 30% of Americans age 65+ will experience a fall. Many of these falls can be prevented with some simple changes in your home.

YES NO

Do you exercise regularly?

Do you take your time when getting up out of a chair or out of bed?

**YES NO**

Do you keep the stairs and walkways in your home free from clutter and trip hazards such as shoes, clothing, extension cords, books and magazines?

Do you have a sturdy handrail on balconies, porches and on both sides of the stairs?

Do you wear sensible shoes? (If you wear socks in your home, consider using socks with rubberized soles)

**BATHROOMS AND KITCHENS ARE THE AREAS IN THE HOME WHERE MOST FALLS OCCUR.** Small changes in these rooms can have a big impact on your safety.

**YES NO**

Do you use non-slip mats in your bathtub and shower?

Do you have grab bars in your bathroom?

Have you removed all throw rugs from your home?

Do you keep your floors clean and dry?

**POOR LIGHTING INCREASES THE RISK OF A FALL.** As we age, our eyes need more light to see clearly. Adding additional lights is a great way to help our eyes see more clearly.

**YES NO**

Do you use nightlights in hallways, bathrooms and bedrooms?

Do you have a lamp or flashlight you can easily reach from your bed?

Do you promptly replace your light bulbs when they burn out?

Do you have light switches at the top and bottom of the stairs and by the entry to every room?

Do you have adequate exterior lighting for your driveway and sidewalks?

*Cottage Grove Fire Department offers a fall prevention program for older adults.*