

FIRE SAFE South Carolina



A COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION PROGRAM

FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY GUIDE

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#FireSafeSC

SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL | 141 MONTICELLO TRAIL

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Travel Safety

Travel may turn a car or a hotel into a home away from home. It is important to prepare for an emergency like you would in your own home. Remember, there are many unpredictable hazards in lodging settings due to elements outside of your control.

Accommodations

- Before your trip, check travel and weather advisories in the area you intend to visit.
- Make a note of whether a building or a room is equipped with hard wired smoke alarms, alarm pull stations, or a fire sprinkler system.
- During check-in, ask the front desk clerk what the fire alarm sounds like.
- Upon entering the room, carefully review the escape plan posted on or near the room door. Find the two closest exits from your room.
- Walk the recommended exit plan to become familiar with the building and its exits.
- Count the number of doors between your room and the exits. This may assist if there is a need to get out in the dark.

Escape Routes

- When the fire alarm sounds, leave right away. Close all doors behind you as you leave. Always use the stairs.
- If there is a lot of smoke on the escape route, get low and go under the smoke to the exit.
- If escape is not possible, call 9-1-1. Turn off fans and air conditioners. Stuff wet towels in the crack under the door. Wait at the window and signal with a flashlight, light colored cloth, or other means of grabbing attention.

Seasonal Homes

During the summer months, it is popular to vacation in seasonal homes. Seasonal homes can include cottages, cabins, RVs, and houseboats. Remember not to leave your fire safety at home when staying in a seasonal home.

- Consider putting together an emergency kit with travel-related supplies.
- Test smoke alarms at seasonal homes. Pack a new smoke alarm and extra batteries in case they need replacing. If more than one needs to be replaced, consider calling the owner.
- In case of an emergency, know the address of the seasonal home.
- Before using for the first time, check any heating or cooling appliances for damage or poor placement.

Lawnmower Safety

There are many potential injuries that can occur while using a lawnmower. Following these tips can decrease your chances of being injured.

Before Use

- Read the manufacturer's equipment manual before starting, operating, or servicing your equipment to avoid any personal injury or property damage.
- Check conditions to make sure there are no thunderstorms in the area.
- Clear the mowing areas of any foreign objects that could be picked up and thrown by the lawnmower blades.
- Make sure safety devices, shields, or switch guards are in place. Hot and sharp parts should be protected.

During Use

- Wear goggles, hearing protection, gloves, closed toe shoes, and long pants.
- Do not drink alcohol, or use other impairing substances, before or during the use of a lawnmower.
- Keep children off the lawn while mowing. Children should not use a mower until they are old enough. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the age requirement is generally 12 for a push mower and 16 for a riding mower.
- Allow the lawnmower to cool completely before refueling.

After Use

- Do not store a hot lawnmower.
- Mowers can catch fire even after use. As a precaution, leave the mower far enough away from buildings and covered areas to prevent a fire from spreading.
- Wait for it to cool completely before storage to reduce the risk of a fire.

Servicing

- When using a mower for the first time, after a long period of inactivity, have it serviced by a professional to ensure it is working correctly.
- Never put hands or feet into the mower to remove grass or debris. Even when the motor is off, the blade is sharp and could still be spinning.
- Do not conduct inspections or repairs on lawnmower equipment before the motor is off, the blades have come to a complete stop, and the spark plug has been removed.

Hurricane Season

Hurricanes are strong storms producing additional risks such as flooding, storm surges, high winds, and tornadoes. Preparing for a hurricane and the associated risks can reduce life-threatening situations.

Before

- Put together an emergency preparedness kit with basic supplies.
- Create an emergency plan including meeting places inside and outside of your neighborhood.
- Be prepared to escape quickly. Know the evacuation routes as well as your destination. Know where local emergency shelters are located.
- Consider precautionary evacuation of animals. Move animals sooner than later, bringing companion animals inside, and move livestock to higher ground.

During

- Stay alert and listen to local news or a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio for official and updated information.
- Stay indoors during a hurricane. Do not walk on beaches, riverbanks, or in flood waters as they may be contaminated with sewage or contain dangerous insects or animals.
- Have flashlights and extra batteries on hand. Do not use candles.
- Keep food and water in locations safe from flood waters.

After

- When the power is out for extended periods, monitor food for spoilage to avoid food poisoning. If power has gone out, monitor refrigerator temperatures to ensure the freezer is at or below 0°F and the refrigerator is at or below 40°F.
- If evacuated, only return when authorities say it is safe.
- Be aware of extended rainfall causing flooding.
- Continue to monitor local news or a NOAA radio station for updated information and instructions.
- Inspect your home and document any damage. Wear protective clothing, including rubber gloves and rubber boots, and be cautious while cleaning.

School Bus Safety

The yellow school bus is one of the most recognizable vehicles on the road. Children need to be taught how to get safely on and off the school bus. Drivers should observe traffic safety rules regarding school buses.

Safety Tips for Children

- **STEP BACK** — While waiting for the bus, stay at least 10 feet (five giant steps) from the edge of the roadway.
- **BE SEEN** — Wear light colored clothing, so the bus driver and other motorists can see you.
- **BE SAFE**— Be mindful of traffic. Don't run or play at the bus top.
- Stay alert and pay attention to your surroundings. Texting or talking on your phone, or listening to music are distractions that could lead to injury.
- While the bus is pulling up, stay at least 10 feet (five giant steps) away from the bus. Before approaching the bus, make sure the bus driver sees you.

Safety Tips for Motorists

Motorists must learn the flashing signal light system school bus drivers use to alert motorists of the school bus stopping to load or unload students.

- Yellow flashing lights indicate the bus is getting ready to stop and load or unload children. Drivers should slow down and prepare to stop.
- Red flashing lights with an extended stop sign arm indicates a stopped school bus with children getting on or off.
- Any highway with only two travel lanes, one in each direction, **MUST STOP** for the bus. This applies to approaching the bus in either direction. You must remain stopped until the lights are no longer flashing and the bus is in motion.
- Any driver on a multi-lane roadway, also considered as a four lane highway, must stop if you are behind the bus. If you are approaching the bus in the front, it is not required for drivers to stop, but proceed with caution.
- Avoid the violations — a traffic ticket is expensive. There is up to \$1,000 in fines and/ or 6 points against your license. Know the law by visiting:
 - <http://www.scdmvonline.com/dmvnew/forms/general.pdf>
- Slow down, prepare to stop, and always look for children.