

# **FIRE SAFE** South Carolina



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A COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION PROGRAM

## FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY GUIDE

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#FireSafeSC

SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL | 141 MONTECELLO TRAIL COLUMBIA, SC

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## Fireworks

South Carolina state law prohibits fireworks from being sold to anyone younger than 16 years old. These safety tips are for those choosing to use consumer fireworks:

### Before Igniting Consumer Fireworks

- Observe local laws. If unsure whether it is legal to use fireworks, check with local officials.
- Observe local weather conditions. Dry weather can make it easier to start a fire.
- Buy from permitted fireworks retailers.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place.
- Always have an adult present when shooting fireworks.
- Use common sense. Always read and follow the directions.
- Only use fireworks outdoors, away from homes, dry grass, and trees.
- Before lighting fireworks ensure people and pets are out of range.
- Never allow young children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of fire or other mishap.
- Avoid buying fireworks packaged in brown paper. This is often a sign the fireworks were made for professional displays and could pose a danger to consumers.
- Be careful when using sparklers as they burn at temperatures of about 2,000 degrees.
- Never experiment or attempt to make your own fireworks.

### During and After Igniting Consumer Fireworks

- Light fireworks one at a time, then move back quickly to a safe distance.
- Never place any part of your body directly over a fireworks device when lighting the fuse.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Never carry fireworks in a pocket.
- Never shoot fireworks from metal or glass containers.
- Put used fireworks in a bucket of water; keep a garden hose on hand.
- Never try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Soak it in water and throw it away.

## Bicycle Safety

Riding bicycles is a fun and healthy way to get exercise, which is why it is a popular means of getting around town. It is important to know the rules of the road regarding bicycles, whether you are riding one or riding near one.

### Before Riding

- Always wear a helmet. Never wear headphones when riding a bike.
- Wear bright clothes and dress in layers to adjust to temperature changes. Tuck and tie shoe laces and pant legs so they don't get caught in the bike chain.
- When riding a bicycle at night, it is state law to equip the bike with a front white light and a red reflector in the rear.
- Ensure the bicycle is equipped with a working brake.

### Avoiding Crashes

- Plan a safe route with less traffic and slower speeds, preferably with a bike lane or bike path. Be aware of where bicyclists are legally required to ride:
  - Every bicyclist riding on a roadway shall ride as near to the right side of the roadway as possible. A bicyclist may, but is not required to, ride on the shoulder of the road.
  - A bicyclist may ride in a lane other than the right-hand lane, if only one lane is available that allows the bicyclist to continue on their intended route.
  - Bicyclists riding on a roadway shall not ride more than two wide except on paths or parts of roadways set aside for the exclusive use of bicycles.
- Communicate intentions to turn, stop, and change lanes using recognized hand signals. State law reads a bicyclist:
  - Shall indicate a left turn by extending the left arm horizontally.
  - Shall indicate stopping or decreasing speed by extending the left or the right arm downward.
  - Is not required to give signals continuously if the hand or arm is needed to control the bicycle.
- Drive with the flow of traffic, in the same direction as traffic. Remember bicyclists are expected to follow the same laws as automobiles.
- It is unlawful to harass, taunt, or maliciously throw an object at or in the direction of any person riding a bicycle.
- A driver of a motor vehicle must maintain a safe operating distance between the motor vehicle and a bicycle.

## Kitchen Fire Safety

Many families gather in the kitchen to spend time together, but it can be one of the most hazardous rooms in the house. Cooking equipment, most often a range or stovetop, is the leading cause of reported home fires and injuries in the United States. Follow these tips from the U.S. Fire Administration.

### Choose Safe Cooking Equipment

- Always use cooking equipment tested and approved by a recognized testing facility.
- Follow manufacturers' instructions and code requirements when installing and operating cooking equipment.

### Stay Alert in the Cooking Area

- Stay alert! To prevent cooking fires, you have to be alert. You won't be if you are sleepy, have been drinking alcohol, or have taken medicine that makes you drowsy.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove. If you are simmering, baking, roasting or boiling food, check it regularly. Be sure to remain in the home while cooking and use a timer to remind you to check your food.

### Keep the Cooking Area Clear

- Keep anything that can catch fire - potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, towels, or curtains - away from your stovetop.
- Wear short, close-fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire if it comes into contact with a gas flame or electric burner.

### How and When to Fight Cooking Fires

- When in doubt, just get out. When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire. Call 9-1-1 immediately.
- If you do try to fight the fire, be sure others are already getting out and you have a clear path to the exit.
- Always keep an oven mitt and a lid nearby when you are cooking. If a small grease fire starts in a pan, smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan (make sure you are wearing the oven mitt). Turn off the burner. Do not move the pan. To keep the fire from restarting, leave the lid on until the pan is completely cool.
- In case of an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed to prevent flames from burning you or your clothing.
- If you have a fire in your microwave oven, turn it off immediately and keep the door closed. Never open the door until the fire is completely out. Unplug the appliance if you can safely reach the outlet.
- After a fire, both ovens and microwaves should be checked and/or serviced before being used again.

## Get out, stay out

An alarming number of people who are hurt or killed in a fire were, at one point, outside of the home. This highlights the importance, in the event of a fire, of remembering to get out and stay out.

### Prepare

- Develop a home fire drill plan to include two ways out of every room. Have a safe meeting place outside of the home. Practice your fire drill.

### GET OUT!

- Get out of the home and go to your safe meeting place.
- Do not leave the safe meeting place until you have accounted for everyone.
- People waiting at the meeting place have an important job of informing the fire department if everyone is outside, and directing them where to go if someone is still inside.

### STAY OUT!

- Do not go back inside the home for any reason. If you go back inside, your life is in danger! Remember: it's easier to rescue one person than two!
- Loved ones, pets, and other personal items are best rescued by the arriving firefighters.

### Sad facts

- Many who make it outside during a fire, but go back inside, don't come back out.
- Many of the potential "rescuers" who go back inside are the only fatality.
- Most items inside a home can be replaced. People cannot be replaced.

## Traffic Safety

Unfortunately, road way accidents are common. Tragically, they cause many injuries and fatalities annually. It is important to reduce roadway risk by practicing defensive driving and maintaining a safe automobile. Always remember, if you are involved in an automobile accident immediately call 9-1-1.

### Automobile safety

- Drive according to posted speed limits and other traffic laws. Remain alert to changing road conditions.
- Have your vehicle serviced regularly by a licensed mechanic. If you are suspicious of a malfunction, or if you spot a leak, get your vehicle inspected and repaired.
- Be alert to changes in the way your vehicle sounds when running, a visible plume of exhaust coming from the tailpipe, and anything else that may indicate a mechanical issue.

### Vehicle fires

There are many causes of vehicle fires. If you are in a car that catches on fire remember the following safety tips:

- Stop
  - Pull to the side of the road.
  - Turn off the ignition to shut off the electric current and stop the flow of gasoline.
  - Put the vehicle in park and set the emergency brake.
- Get Out
  - Make sure everyone gets out of the vehicle. Then move at least 100 feet away.
  - Monitor the other traffic on the road way and keep everyone together.
- Call for help
  - Call 9-1-1 to report the fire.
  - Never go back to the car to retrieve an item while waiting for first responders, property is not worth your life.