



Cy-Fair Fire Department Shares a List of Commonly Overlooked Household Dangers

Fire Prevention Week is October 6-12. CFFD warns of some common under-the-radar fire hazards and how to reduce their risk.

HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES, October 4, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When it comes to fire safety, most people immediately think of causes like unattended candles or kitchen mishaps. Yet, there are many more fire hazards that lurk in people's daily routines that are equally dangerous but often overlooked. Mike Clements, assistant chief-administration at the Cy-Fair Fire Department, wants to help educate the community on these lesser-known fire hazards.

"While many people aren't aware of all the possibilities, we've seen them all," says Clements. "Over the years, we've responded to a wide range of fires caused by things people never realized could be such an immediate risk."

Here, Clements highlights several commonly overlooked fire hazards that residents should be aware of:

Bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans. Many people use these every day to help reduce moisture or bad odors. While they appear harmless, these fans can be a potential fire hazard due to a number of factors, such as faulty wiring, running them for an extended period of time, and dust accumulation.

"Bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans should be examined periodically and regularly cleaned," advises Clements. "Also, they shouldn't be left running for extended amounts of time. Don't leave the fan on for more than 30 minutes and never leave it running when leaving the house."

Improper storage or use of chemicals (including pool chemicals). Many households use a variety of chemicals, from cleaning agents to pool maintenance supplies. While these products are helpful for keeping homes clean and pools sanitized, many of them are flammable or reactive. Storing them near heat sources, mixing incompatible chemicals, or mishandling them can lead to fires.

"Always read labels; store chemicals in cool, dry places; and never mix substances without knowing their interactions," says Clements.

Space heaters. As cooler months approach, space heaters are a popular way to add heat to a room. However, they can be a significant fire hazard if not used properly. Those using a space heater should make sure it meets industry requirements and has been tested in a qualified testing laboratory. Place heaters three feet away from walls, furniture, curtains, or anything else that is flammable.

“When you leave the room or go to bed, space heaters should be turned off and unplugged,” says Clements. “Also, choose a heater with added protections like a thermostat and auto shut-off when tipped over.”

Overloaded outlets. It can be tempting to plug too many cords into an outlet or power multiple high-demand appliances. For example, people do this when setting up a home office or celebrating the holidays with an intricate light display. However, overloaded sockets pose a severe fire hazard—the circuits can become overloaded and spark a house fire.

“Always follow the manufacturer’s guidelines for how much power an outlet or strip can handle,” notes Clements. “As a general rule, more than two appliances shouldn’t be plugged into one outlet, and loading many appliances onto one power strip should be avoided.”

Fire pits. With fall approaching, use of outdoor fire pits will increase as people gather to enjoy the cooler temperatures. However, these fire pits can quickly become a hazard if not set up and used properly. Embers or sparks that escape from the fire pit can easily ignite nearby flammable materials, such as grass, wood, or nearby structures.

“Place your fire pit on a non-combustible surface at least ten feet away from your home, other structures, trees, or anything else flammable,” advises Clements. “Supervise any children when using the fire pit and make sure the pit is extinguished when you’re done.”

Outdoor kitchens. Entertaining spaces with outdoor kitchens have become more and more popular. It’s important that homeowners are aware of the unique fire risks that come with these areas. Grills, built-in stovetops, and other cooking appliances can easily ignite nearby combustible materials, such as wooden structures, tree overhang, and outdoor furniture. Also, long-term exposure to the outdoors can break down gas or electrical connections.

“To minimize their risk, ensure heat sources are placed well away from flammable items,” advises Clements. “Routinely check for gas leaks and wear on grills, and never leave cooking appliances unattended.”

By being aware of these hidden hazards, residents can take steps to reduce their risk of a home fire.

“Fire safety isn’t just about recognizing the obvious risks—it’s about being vigilant with every potential source of danger in the home,” says Clements. “The more we educate ourselves and

take preventative steps, the safer our homes will be.”

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About CFFD:

The Cy-Fair Fire Department (CFFD) provides professional fire and emergency medical services to the citizens of Northwest Harris County, Texas. From its beginnings in the late 1950s, the Cy-Fair FD is now one of the largest, busiest combination fire departments in the United States, with over 38,000 emergency responses each year. CFFD covers the 164-square-mile area of Harris County Emergency Services District #9 (HCESD9) in the unincorporated part of Northwest Harris County. Responding from 13 stations strategically located throughout the territory, the 550-plus men and women of the fire department are among the best trained and equipped firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and dispatchers in the nation.

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