



CITY OF CAPE TOWN  
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA  
STAD KAAPSTAD



# FIRE & LIFE SAFETY HOME CHECKLIST



Making progress possible. Together.

## How safe is your home and family?

This fire and life safety checklist will help you identify potential fire hazards in your home. It also introduces good housekeeping practices that will improve the fire safety of your home significantly.

Answer the questions honestly.

If your answer is 'no' to any of the questions, take action before someone gets hurt.

For more information contact your local fire station or our Fire and Life Safety Education Officers on 021 703 3184 or send an e-mail to [lifesafety@capetown.gov.za](mailto:lifesafety@capetown.gov.za).

Let's work together to protect the ones we love.

 FIRE DETECTION AND FIREFIGHTING	YES	NO
<b>Smoke alarms:</b>		
Does your home have at least one smoke alarm to protect your family while you sleep? (Most house fires occur at night. Smoke alarms have reduced the fire death rate by 50% in the US and UK)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you test the battery of your smoke alarm at least once a month and change the battery once a year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does everyone know the sound of the smoke alarm?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Fire extinguishers:</b>		
Does your home have a fire extinguisher or a fire blanket that meets the South African National Standards (SANS)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has your fire extinguisher been tested by a technician approved in terms of the SANS during the past 12 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your fire extinguisher stored in an accessible and convenient location, e.g. near an exit door?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you received training or advice from your local fire brigade on how to use your fire extinguisher safely?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND ESCAPE PLANS	YES	NO
Have you and your family practised an escape plan? (An escape plan will speed up your escape and may save your life.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you have young children or family members with limited mobility, has someone been assigned to help them escape in the event of fire? (Young children and the elderly account for most fire deaths)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have your children practised how to escape without adult help?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do babysitters, caregivers and visitors all know the escape procedure in the event of a fire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you practise your escape plan at least once every six months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you keep a torch readily available for use during a power failure or fire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## ESCAPING FROM FIRE

YES

NO

Do you know that if a fire breaks out you must get everyone out of the house and then call the fire brigade?

Does everyone know that they should get out and stay out if a fire breaks out? (Leave behind all valuables and possessions. Make sure children know not to hide.)

Do you know that you should not attempt to fight the fire until the fire brigade has been called and only if there is no risk to yourself?

Does your family know the emergency number 107 and is 107 displayed on your telephone to assist children if they have to call for help?

Does everyone know that they must crawl low under smoke to escape from fire? (Breathing in smoke can kill you. Cool air near the floor will help you to breathe and to crawl to safety.)

Do you have two ways to get out of the house in the event of a fire?

Can your burglar bars open from the inside to prevent you from being trapped inside?

Are your windows, doors and floor kept free of any obstructions to allow an easy exit in the event of a fire?

Can you open doors quickly and are keys readily available to unlock doors? (Keep keys in doors and security gates or on hooks nearby.)

Do you know that if a fire breaks out in a room, you should close the door to limit the growth of the fire?

Do you sleep with your doors closed to prevent the spread of smoke and fire?

Do you know that if you are trapped by fire, you should close the door to your room and put a blanket or towel at the bottom of the door to keep out the smoke? (Call for help from the window.)

Will you remember to close all doors behind you when you are evacuating your home?

Does your family have a safe place to meet away from your home?

 <b>PREVENTING THE FIRE: HEAT AND FUEL</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG):</b> If you use gas, do you limit your 9 kg cylinders to the one in use and one spare?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has your gas installation been checked and certified by a registered LP gas installer and/or the Fire Department where applicable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are children always supervised when gas, a naked flame, oil heaters or open fires are used?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When lighting gas appliances, do you light the match first before opening the gas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Heaters:</b> Are heaters used in safe areas (where they cannot be knocked over and items cannot fall on them) at least 1 m away from furniture, furnishings and anything else that can burn? (Radiated heat causes many house fires.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you turn heaters off when you leave the house and when you are sleeping?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you avoid drying your clothes on or near heaters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you keep a window slightly open in rooms where paraffin or gas heaters are in use? (Open-flame heaters consume oxygen and produce poisonous gases.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are curtains kept away from heat sources and possible ignition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use and store electric blankets according to the manufacturer's instructions and do you fit them correctly. Are they switched off when you are in bed, serviced regularly and not used with hot water bottles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Cooking:</b> Do you make sure that you never leave cooking food unattended? (Many fires are caused by food left unattended on a stove, especially oil.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When deep frying, do you keep your pot less than one third full of oil? (This lowers the risk of hot oil boiling over onto your stove.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does everyone know that you should use a damp cloth to smother a cooking-oil fire? (Do not put water on an oil fire because it will explode.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

 <b>PREVENTING THE FIRE: HEAT AND FUEL continued</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Do you avoid wearing loose-fitting clothing while cooking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has everyone practiced how to 'stop, drop and roll' if their clothing catches on fire? (Do not run as this makes the fire worse.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are pans used in a safe position on the stove? (Turn handles inwards but not over a hot area so that they cannot be knocked over and so that are out of reach of children.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are cords from toasters, kettles and other electrical items kept away from the stove and not left hanging within reach of small children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the area above and around your stove free from items that can burn?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are items that attract children (sweets and biscuits) stored away from your cooking areas so children are not tempted to climb onto hot surfaces?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you put out braai fires when you have finished cooking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does everyone know that you need to cool a burn? (Act fast and hold the burn in cold water for at least 20 minutes.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Fireplaces:</b>		
Has your fireplace been installed correctly? (Many fires occur due to poor installation. People also die of carbon monoxide poisoning when gas appliances are installed without sufficient ventilation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are fireguards placed around open fires? (Keep combustible items away from the fireguard and avoid drying clothes in front of fires.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are mirrors hung away from fireplaces or other sources of heat? (Do not stand too close to the fire, you could set your clothing alight.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <b>PREVENTING THE FIRE: ELECTRICAL SAFETY</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Are all electrical items not in use switched off and unplugged? (Electrical faults account for a large number of fires, especially at night.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are TVs, hi-fis and other electrical appliances switched off and not left on standby mode?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are electric irons and other appliances sufficiently cooled before being stored?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

 <b>PREVENTING THE FIRE: ELECTRICAL SAFETY continued</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Do you have enough plugs in each room to limit the use of adaptors and cables and to prevent overloading?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are plug sockets and extension cords overloaded? (The rule is: 'one socket, one plug'. You could overheat a socket and start a fire by putting several adaptors into one socket. High power equipment can overload extension cords.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are electrical cords and flexes in good condition? Are frayed or damaged cords being replaced and not simply repaired?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If extension cords are used, are they used safely (not under carpets or across doorways)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are extension cords properly secured (not by using nails or staples)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you avoid taking portable electrical equipment into the bathroom to prevent electrical shocks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do all your electrical appliances meet the SANS?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do all indicator warning lights on stoves and appliances work to indicate that the appliance is on or off?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you carry out a safety inspection of your home and correct all the faults regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <b>PREVENTING THE FIRE: SAFE PRACTICES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
If anyone smokes inside your home, do you have enough large, deep, non-tip ashtrays?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you make sure that you never leave a lit cigarette or pipe unattended? (They may fall onto a chair or carpet and start a fire.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is 'no smoking in bed' a rule in your home? (It is easy to fall asleep when smoking in bed or in an armchair.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all ashtrays emptied regularly into a suitable metal container?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you avoid placing ashtrays on chair arms where they can be knocked over?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are matches and lighters kept locked away – out of reach, out of sight and out of mind –of children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you make sure that young children are never left alone at home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you must have candles in your home, are these candles for decoration only and if lit are they never left unattended?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

 <b>HOT WATER HAZARDS / POOL SAFETY</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Are kettles, pans, cups, etc. kept out of reach of young children? (Hot water is responsible for most burns in the home.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When bathing young children, do you first add cold water before adding hot water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your hot water geyser's thermostat set below 55 degrees Celsius?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are taps correctly colour-coded and do children know the difference between the taps for hot water and cold water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have all babies been 'drown-proofed' and do all children know how to swim?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your swimming pool have a pool net?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a pool fence with a self-closing gate? (This is a legal requirement as many children drown at home. It is also useful to undergo first-aid and CPR training.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <b>SAFE STORAGE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Are all household chemicals stored in suitable containers and kept away from children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all medicines stored in child proof containers and kept away from children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all guns locked away in a safe that is SANS approved?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you keep storage areas such as sheds, cupboards, loft areas free from paper, furniture, rags and other things that can burn?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are combustibles/flammables such as petrol, thinners and paints kept to a minimum, sealed and stored safely away from ignition sources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are pool chemicals kept in a safe place away from brake fluid and other items?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your loft insulated with non-combustible material and are combustibles that you store in the loft kept to a minimum?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your roof non-combustible? If you have a thatch roof, has it been treated with a fire retardant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Emergency numbers

**107**

(from a landline) or

**021 480 7700**

(from a cellphone)

This checklist was produced by the City of Cape Town Fire and Rescue Service: Fire and Life Safety Education Section.

This checklist is also available in Afrikaans and Xhosa.



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