



Safety Tips for Today's Home

Fire Safety

Charging Electronic Devices and Toys: When charging phones and other electronic devices (kids' toys, tablets, wireless headsets, etc), keep charging stations in sight and do not plug too many devices into any one electric socket. Many modern electronic devices and toys require additional electricity and can overload circuits. Overloaded electrical outlets can short out and cause fires. If you are charging anything with high electric current requirements, only use newer power strips that can account for the new electricity demands.

Detectors: Working carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are still top of the list for home safety. Change batteries twice a year – during the Spring and Fall time changes. Make sure you have detectors in each of your sleeping areas and in the kitchen. If you have multiple floors in your home, make sure there is at least one of each on every floor. Both detectors are now sold with 10-year batteries. If you do not like changing batteries, now might be a good time to switch.

Fire Planning: Plan two exits out of any room in your home. Be sure everyone knows the plan. Keep a working flashlight by each exit and keep clutter out of the way.

Information Privacy

Security and Communication Devices: When you buy a security camera or a home internet communication device make sure you know what software you will use with it (Alexa, Siri, Google Home, etc). Every software has different privacy settings, which are critical to protecting your information. Check out the Know Your Settings Guide to learn more.

WiFi: Some WiFi routers and extenders are secured through a universal login. Even when a WiFi router comes with a password to access the network, the main router may not be fully secured because it can be accessed through a universal login. Check with the WiFi provider before connecting to your network. If the network is secured with a universal login, work with the provider to adjust the settings.

Software Updates: Keep security software and system updates current. Having the latest version is the best defense against viruses, malware, and other online threats. It is critical to know what you are installing. BEFORE clicking install, do an online search to see if there are any known issues with the upgrade, particularly for your devices and computers.

Shred It: All mail contains your address. Some mail also contains hidden account information – especially in catalogs, coupons, and offers. Do not just throw out junk mail – shred it. Communities and businesses sometimes sponsor “shred days” where you can take advantage. While basic shredders are better than simply throwing out mail, cross shredding is considered the gold standard.

Sneaky Cameras: Cameras are in everything from phones, computers, baby and pet monitors, televisions and communications devices. Cameras can also be accessed without these devices being engaged. When you are not using the camera, put a blocker in place over the opening to protect yourself from unwanted invasions of your privacy.

Young Families

Televisions: Televisions can tip over easily. Secure your televisions, electronic devices, and gaming consoles to avoid young children getting hurt if any machines tip over. Televisions should be mounted on the wall. Electronic cords and wires should be tucked behind entertainment consoles, out of reach from little fingers.

Cordless Window Blinds: The window treatment industry has agreed to phase out window treatments with cords. From 2012 to 2017, the CPSC received 50 fatality reports related to window cord strangulation among infants and young children. Stock window coverings sold in stores or online should be cordless or free of accessible cords to meet a revised voluntary safety standard that took effect on December 15, 2018. Go cordless today.

Children are faster than you think: Lock away medicines and cleaning supplies. Install and keep safety gates/guards – for stairs and windows – always locked. Never leave children alone in the bathtub when they are young. Also, do not forget to secure furniture and electronics away from climbing, prying hands.